Lilith

INDEPENDENT, JEWISH & FRANKLY FEMINIST

A Different Lens on the News?
Women Reporting from Israel

Looking for (Late) **Romance**

Words That Hurt
Abusive Language in an Intimate Context

plus…
The Winner of Lilith's Annual **Fresh Fiction Prize!**

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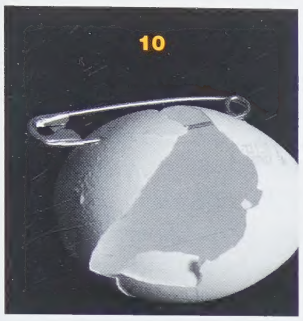
Why is this magazine called Lilith? In the Garden of Eden, long before the eating of the apple, the Holy One created the first human beings—a man, Adam, and a woman, Lilith. Lilith said "We are equal because we are created from the same earth."
—from *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, 23a-b



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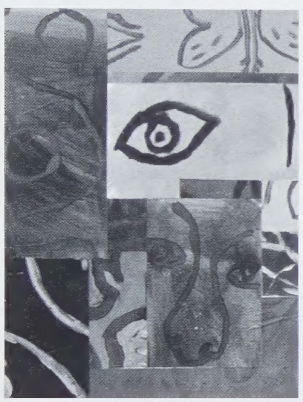

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Cover: Photograph by Rina Castelnuovo for The New York Times.

It's Not Just Small Change

The good we can do feels like it's on a sliding scale—from saving a drowning person to handing loose change to a supplicant on the street. But sometimes there are people around us drowning in ways not so obvious, and their signals for assistance may be hardly more than a whispered suggestion for a visit from the other end of a phone line. I've been thinking a lot recently about how we extend ourselves to help, partly because of a powerful short documentary I've just seen on *bikkur cholim*—visiting the sick—produced by my friend Vicki Rosenstreich at the Jewish Board of Family and Children Services in New York, and partly because of two conversations I had in Houston about how to reach out to struggling teen girls.

The film is humbling, showing by example how little it would take from most of us to save someone—from loneliness, from despair, and from the pain of thinking that no one cares. Elie Wiesel, interviewed in the film, says that the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. Respecting—really *listening to*—the life stories of the person you're visiting. Maybe this is obvious to you. Maybe you do these good deeds already. For me, the film was reminder of the small ways to do more.

Here's one way. In Houston, where I was giving a talk and visiting a Lilith "salon," lawyer Maida Asofsky, a Lilith reader, told me about the difficulties finding adult women to help pregnant teens in Texas. Forty-four states have laws on the books requiring parental notification or consent before a person under 18 can get an abortion. Texas's law requires not just that a pregnant teen notify her parents, but that they actually sign their consent. A teen who fears dangerous repercussions from notifying her parents can seek "judicial bypass"—persuading a judge to give permission for the abortion without involving her parents. But teens needing this judicial bypass in the first place may not have any way to make a confidential phone call to set up an appointment for a pregnancy test or with a volunteer lawyer, and no way to get to these appointments. Perhaps Jewish women's organizations—the same ones working to reform laws on domestic violence and lobbying for the appointment of pro-choice judges—can organize their members to help pregnant teens get the services they are permitted by law but denied by circumstance. I realize that this is a fraught suggestion; the help may rouse the ire of the parents, and may involve colluding in deception, but surely we can figure out some safeguards. We spare a dollar for the mendicant on the street and feel generous, but what about sparing a few hours to assist a pregnant teenager through this maze?

The second conversation I had in Houston was with delegates to the Women of Reform Judaism assembly. Through them I saw up close how larger-scale change can come about—in this case, a change in consciousness. Two years ago, Lilith published a provocative report by our then-intern Ilana Kramer, about oral sex and young teens ("'It's Not Sex' the Girls Say," Winter 2003-2004). Ilana interviewed adolescents, their parents, their chaperones, sex-ed professionals, educators and camp counselors. Everyone agreed: adolescent girls were performing oral sex on boys, their male peers, sometimes even at bat- and bar-mitzvah parties. We asked some urgent questions: who is in control, who is getting pleasure, who is servicing whom? None of the answers suggested that the girls were enjoying these acts; instead, they were part of an elaborate jockeying for status with the boys. This November, in Houston, Women of Reform Judaism passed a resolution that sisterhoods offer help and referrals for teens and younger girls involved in premature sex, and in other behaviors dangerous to their emotional and physical wellbeing. Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, in a major address to congregational leaders, acknowledged the inequity in the sexual behavior of many teens, calling, in essence, for a new Jewish sexual ethic with females and males equally valued. We can only imagine that Lilith's courageous reporting helped the largest movement in American Judaism reach this day.

For a teenager seeking an abortion, what's permitted by law is often denied by circumstance.

Susan

Susan Weidman Schneider
Editor in Chief

Beatrice Pasternak of St. Louis, a longtime supporter and friend of the magazine, passed away earlier this year. The news reached us in the form of a letter from Bea's estate, announcing that Bea had left Lilith almost $18,000 in her will—the first bequest Lilith has ever received. Bea's average annual contribution to Lilith was about $150, so the amount of her bequest was a total surprise—though the impulse was familiar. Bea's generosity of spirit was evident in our every contact with her, in notes and phone calls over the years. Her will reflected this kindness and concern; Bea left funds to Lilith and to other Jewish and women's charities. Her name and her legacy will live on as a blessing, for which we are grateful.

Lilith

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LONG AGO IN EDEN the SNAKE talks turkey to Eve
LOOK, YOU STAY HERE AND YOU'LL BE A SECOND CLASS - CITIZEN FOREVER. YOU LEAVE EDEN, AND YOU HAVE TO WAIT MAYBE 2, 3 THOUSAND YEARS AT THE MOST, FOR A SQUARE DEAL.
5-25
IT'S TEMPTING.
I'M STAYING HERE.
Nicole Hollander

THE SUPPORT FOR LILITH THIS QUARTER INCLUDES SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR EDITOR'S NEW DISCRETIONARY FUND, CREATED BY BOARD MEMBER BARBARA DOBKIN IN HONOR OF SUSAN WEIDMAN SCHNEIDER'S 60TH BIRTHDAY.

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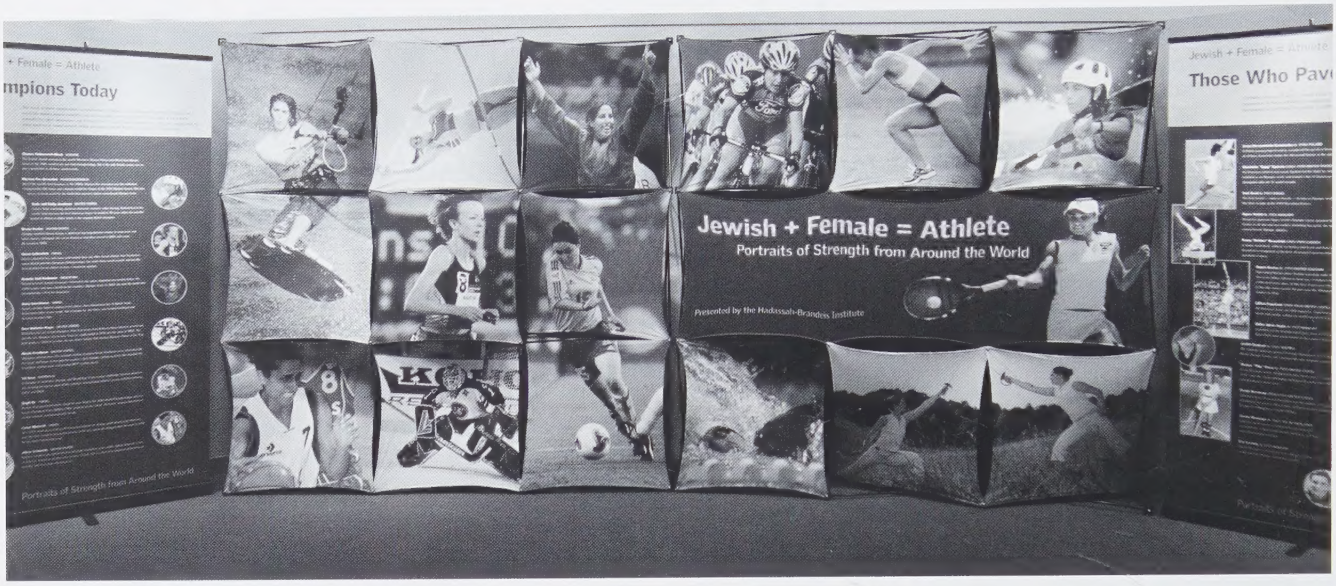
Traditionally, the voice of the Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. **No more.** These pages are for news about Jewish women, **in our own strong voices.**



Who Says Jewish Women Don't Play to Win?

The eyes of every player on the Brandeis women's tennis team scanned the exhibit hall, and when they sighted their target, they zoomed in to get close. The subject of their awe towered over nearly all of them. She was **Angela Buxton**, the only Jewish woman to win at Wimbledon, where in 1956 she rocked the competition on the world's most prestigious tennis courts. She'd endured bitter and limiting anti-Semitism that threatened her career, and lived a life lifted, in her words, "out of the ordinary." Responding to a question about talent, Buxton insisted "I was really only above average."

Buxton, along with Olympic cyclist **Nicole Freedman**, winner of the 2000 and 2001 US National Cycling Championships, spoke at the September opening of "Jewish + Female = Athlete: Portraits of Strength from Around the World," a project of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute at Brandeis which features a traveling exhibit and a 13-month calendar of 27 Jewish women athletes with lively biographies and action photos of contemporary competitors and historic trailblazers.

Buxton revealed that, as a young woman, she had held the idealistic conviction that, "If I could get the ball over the net that final time, no one could take it away from me." But the better she did on the court, the more discrimination she faced. Buxton's mother, Violet, her greatest influence, recognized politely worded exclusions for the anti-Semitic barriers they were, and deftly deflected them. But she could not force people to play tennis with her daughter if they didn't want to, so Buxton found herself without a doubles partner until she met fellow outcast and African-American tennis great **Althea Gibson**. It was with Gibson that Buxton won Wimbledon. *The Match: Althea Gibson & Angela Buxton: How Two Outsiders—One Black, the Other Jewish—Forged a Friendship and Made Sports History*, by Bruce Schoenfeld (Amistad, 2004), tells their story.

Freedman, a Jewish female athlete in a later era, tells a different story. "I was fortunate to grow up in a place and time where religion and gender didn't matter," she said. It wasn't just the Jewish women athletes of prior generations who paved the way, she said; it was also the survivors of pogroms and the Holocaust, the grandparents and parents who worked hard so their children would have opportunities they could only dream of.

At least in the U.S., Jewish women athletes face far less hostility today, but still it took a phone call from one university president to another to ensure that the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Regional Tournament was not scheduled for the High Holidays this year, as it had been in the past; **Shani Reich**, who is Orthodox and captain of the Brandeis tennis team, was the woman who spoke up and made it happen.

—*Jeri Zeder*

For more about Jewish + Female = Athlete: Portraits of Strength from Around the World, and to order a calendar, visit www.brandeis.edu/hbi.

Justifying Jewish Law (*i.e.*, Helping it to become more just)

"The smartest thing that could have been done to keep women out of leadership roles [in the Conservative movement] would have been to keep women out of the Talmud department," quipped Talmud scholar Rabbi **Judith Hauptman** at a November symposium on "Women in Law/Women in Halakhah."

"This might be the first public forum for a discussion about how women have achieved their heightened status in Jewish law and American civil legislation," announced **Lisa Kogen**, coordinator of the symposium, which was sponsored by the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, the sisterhood organization of Conservative synagogues. In the opening

plenary, Hauptman, Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at JTS, and Dr. **Alyssa Gray**, Assistant Professor of Codes and Responsa Literature at the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College. addressed key issues of women's roles under Jewish law (*halakhah*), including the obligation to pray, the evolution of bat mitzvah and the ordination of women as rabbis and cantors. With a staggering command of the Talmudic evidence, Hauptman chronicled some of her own battles to push for an expansion of women's halakhic roles to keep Judaism in line with our human ethical impulses. She showed how such halakhic changes are not new to Judaism: The Torah teaches that a man who rapes a woman must take her as his wife, but the Talmudic rabbis, in an act of "interpretive subversion," added a stipulation requiring the woman's consent in the matter.

What about civil law? Professor **Elizabeth M. Schneider** of Brooklyn Law School, an expert on gender and law, reviewed landmark developments in women's relationship to American civil law, starting with the 1872 case *Bradwell v. Illinois*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that it was natural and proper for women to be excluded from the legal profession to maintain the "respective spheres of man and woman," with women performing the duties of motherhood and wife in accordance with the "law of the Creator." Likewise, the ruling in the 1951 *Hoyt v. Florida* case gave women—but not men—outright exemption from jury service, on the grounds that a woman's role in the home and family was so important that she should not be encumbered by other obligations. In citing these cases, Schneider was, of course, speaking about women becoming lawyers and not rabbis, about women's exemption from jury service rather than from prayer. But the parallels were not lost on the over 200 women (and a handful of men), at the day-long event, which was held at the movement's Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York.

A special initiative brought in 50 high school girls from Conservative day schools. This program, run by Rabbi **Karen Reiss Medwed**, trained the students for advocacy in their own schools. "I don't feel comfortable wearing a tallit, maybe because my mom didn't wear one," commented **Aliza Sternstein** of the Solomon Schechter High School of Long Island. On the other hand, **Harriet Merkowitz**, a longstanding member of Women's League who might have been Aliza's mother's age, reflected that "When I was 13, I didn't want to have a bat mitzvah. But I've come a long way. I don't wear tefillin, but I do wear a tallit. How this has all happened fascinates me."

—*Ilana Kurshan*

For a packet of supplementary readings collected by the symposium's speakers, write to womensleague@wlcj.org.

"The Reform Movement's dedication to the equality of women **'is worth nothing if Jewish girls define their worth by how they please boys.'"**

*— Rabbi **Eric Yoffie**, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, speaking about oral sex and young teens to 4,200 people attending the movement's biennial convention, November 2005.*

"We have the capacity to be the leaders for whom we are waiting."

*—**Ruth Messinger,** accepting the Eisendrath award for service to the Jewish community, presented to her by the Union for Reform Judaism, November 2005*

Being a mother (but not being a father) is a full-time job.... **"Working mother" is a phrase akin to "deadbeat dad." Both imply someone who is not fulfilling her or his social responsibilities.**

*—**E.J. Graff** in "The Working Mommy Trap" circulated by the National Council for Research on Women, October 2005*

Jewish Women Changing America

If, as historian **Paula Hyman** claims, there are "feminist clicks"—moments when, as a feminist woman in society, one notices one's own invisibility—then there were certainly moments of "unclick" at the recent Jewish Women Changing America conference at Barnard College in New York, moments that provided a sense of community for American Jewish women interested in American Jewish women.

b c r w
The Barnard Center for Research on Women
The Ingeborg, Tamara & Yonina Rennert Women in Judiasm Forum
JEWISH WOMEN CHANGING AMERICA:
CROSS-GENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

Several overarching themes colored the discussion of this two-day event: how to relate to the larger community, how to work across generational divides, how the feminist Jewish community should relate to increasing political polarization over Israel, and what should be the role of feminism in an interdenominational (or, as panelist and Conservative rabbinical student **Danya Ruttenberg** put it, "post-denominational") Jewish world.

A session on "Changing Judaism" explored feminism through presenters representing all four main denominations of Judaism. The panelists—Reform Rabbi **Sue Levi Elwell**, Rabbi **Judith Hauptman**, Talmud professor at the Conservative Jewish Theological Seminary, Danya Ruttenberg, Professors **Norma Joseph** and **Lori Lefkowitz** and moderator **Judith Plaskow**—managed to disagree with one another respectfully, mostly about the role and limits of halakha, while certain common sentiments emerged. These included repeated affirmations that the feminist changes still to come need to be accomplished in a positive way—because feminist change is itself inherently positive. Several specific agendas included the desire of Lori Lefkowitz of Kolot, the Center for Jewish Women's and Gender Studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and one of the driving forces behind ritualwell.com, to make Jewish ritual more accessible, and Norma Joseph's push for legal rights of *agunot* (women whose husbands will not give them a religious divorce). All the panelists agreed to avoid what Joseph referred to as "us-versus-themism," and articulated a willingness to reach across denominationalism.

The conference, presented by the Barnard Center for Research on Women, at the **Ingeborg, Tamara** and **Yonina Rennert** Women in Judaism Forum, failed only one respect: its title. The event did not explore Jewish women's effects upon the larger American culture. A more accurate description would have been "Jewish Women Changing Jewish America."

—Melanie Weiss

"While the public world has changed, albeit imperfectly, to accommodate women among the elite, private lives have hardly budged. **The real glass ceiling is at home.**"

—***Linda Hirshman*** *in an article entitled "Homeward Bound" in The American Prospect, December 2005.*

Why There's Still a "Women's Issue"

You go, girl! Germany has a new female head of state. **Geena Davis**' compelling performance in Commander in Chief helps us imagine that America could, too. The presidents of prestigious Princeton, MIT and Brown are women. Miami-Dade has a veritable dynasty of effective female state's attorneys. In Boston, the sheriff and police commissioner are women.

The face of leadership is increasingly female—far from enough, but getting there. So why, girlfriends and boyfriends, is there still a women's issue in America?

Some reasons a "woman problem" persists:

- Wage discrimination. As economist **Evelyn Murphy** points out in her new book, *Getting Even*, "Women working full time—not part-time, not on maternity leave, not consultants—still earn only 77 cents to a full-time working man's dollar." Yet U.S. employers pay millions of dollars annually to settle sex-discrimination claim—Murphy says $263 million in 2002 alone.
- Educated professional women opting out. Accurate data are scarce, but anecdotes are oft-repeated. Affluent suburbs teem with 30-something mothers with MBAs, JDs, MDs and PhDs who left partner tracks at investment banks or law firms to focus on their children. Harvard Business School sees the need to help alumnae reenter the work force.
- Struggling single mothers. According to last week's Census Bureau report, 29 percent of all new mothers are unmarried, and about half of unmarried mothers are poor. Washington, D.C., where national policy is set, has the highest rates of single motherhood nationwide, and 36.3 percent of all new D.C. mothers live in poverty. (Hello, Washington pols, are you listening?)

The U.S. shines in women's educational attainment and has good scores for economic participation and political empowerment. However, the U.S. ranks poorly on both economic opportunity and health and well-being, dragged down by meager maternity leave and limited government-supported child-care. And compared with other developed nations, America has high rates of teenage pregnancies and maternal mortality—shocking given a relatively large number of physicians.

This is the American paradox. We applaud individual achievement against all odds but fail to put in place the social and community supports that could shift the odds.

You go, girl!—straight to your nearest elected officials to demand change. If not for yourself, then for your sisters and daughters.

—*Rosabeth Moss Kanter*

Kanter is a Harvard Business School professor and best-selling author of Confidence: How Winning Streaks & Losing Streaks Begin & End *(Crown). Adapted with permission from the Miami Herald, October 20, 2005.*
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Girls eat the leftovers

"In Darfur, the men and boys often eat completely separately from women and girls. The leftover food is for the women and girls," reports **Kate Newton**, a program officer for the United Nations World Food Program in Sudan.

None of the major humanitarian agencies that study and work on it keeps gender-specific counts, but because growing up female often means growing up as the lesser child, it is widely accepted that far more girls than boys are going without adequate food.

The U.N.'s World Food Program school feeding program is pursuing anti-poverty policies already familiar in the developed countries, such as free school lunch for all children. But in dispensing cooking oil to children with good attendance—including girls—it also tackles the educational disparities between boys and girls and the status gap that girls suffer inside their homes.

"Girls were not encouraged to go to school," said **Margaret Carrington**, a World Food Program spokesperson, who explained how the school feeding program works in Pakistan. "So we gave them an attendance card. If their attendance was good they would get cooking oil to bring home. This gives a girl a power position in the family structure. Before, she was just an extra mouth to feed. Now she is a player in the family."

—from "Girls' Hunger Fought With Cooking Oil" by ***Anna Grossman*** *in Women's eNews 11/28/05*

Ever Seen a Grey-haired Wig?

Estie, 18, of Boro Park, Brooklyn is thinking about marriage. She is also thinking about her *sheitl*, the wig that will denote her status as a married woman. Although Estie's hair is naturally thick and curly, her *sheitl* will be straight. "It's easier," she says. "Curly hair has to be washed and styled very often. Straight hair can just be brushed."

JOAN E. ROTH

What's more, Estie adds, "I like straight hair better."

Shaindy, a 25-year-old speech therapist from Long Island, agrees. "I have curly hair, but before I got married I would always blow dry it straight when I was going out or going on a date. It's a societal thing. You look more attractive when you straighten your hair. When you're going to spends thousands of dollars on a wig, you want it to look good. It makes sense that you'll go the straight hair route."

Sales staff at Georgie Wigs in Boro Park's heavily Hasidic neighborhood say that their most popular wigs are styled into short, straight bobs. "Most of the human hair comes from Korea. There's not a lot of curly hair out there to be purchased," said one clerk who asked not to be identified. "But styles change. Right after 'Pretty Woman' came out, some women wanted their wigs permed. Every year or so the designers study what looks are popular and they develop new *sheitl* styles. Right now page boys, chin to shoulder length, are in demand."

While Orthodox rabbis and their wives periodically rail against women whose tresses are immodestly flamboyant, many religious people feel they are fighting a losing battle. Although sheitls were originally intended to divert male eyes from the sensual allure of swaying hair, flash forward several hundred years, click on the web pages of most sheitlmachers, and you'll see marketing that scoffs at this notion. Georgie, for one, sells wigs called Delite, Diva, Nirvana and Passion. Sheitl.com sells Cayenne, FruFru and Celebration.

"I went to a *sheitlmacher* recently," says 70-year-old Ethel. "There was a French hairdresser there. He was looking at the women and he said, 'You Jewish women. I don't understand. Outside you are ooh-lah-lah, but for your husband you are uggghh.' It's true. When I'm home I wear a snood, but when I go out I want to look good so I wear a carefully-styled wig."

Part of looking "good" involves color, and those walking the streets of Boro Park, Flatbush or Williamsburg—New York's most frum neighborhoods—will be hard pressed to find grey- or white-haired women.

"Most people don't look good in grey," says 63-year-old Chana. "When I started turning grey I decided to stay with a brown sheitl.

Ethel concurs. "No one wants to look aged."

"We have customers from all over the U.S., Australia, England, Israel and South Africa," says a Georgie Wigs staffer. "And maybe—maybe—we sell two grey wigs a year."

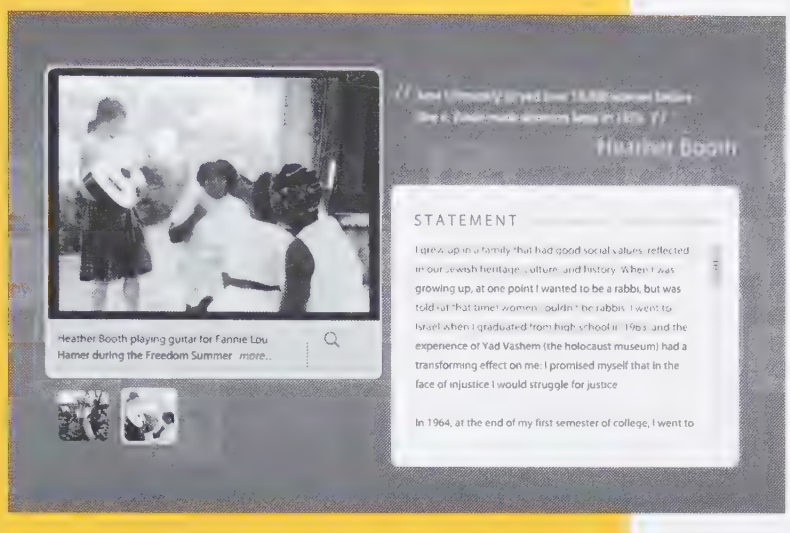
Fraidy, an Orthodox lawyer, says "When I was a kid in the 1970s, the camp director wore a wig with streaks of grey. I haven't seen that look since, but who knows? It might make a comeback."

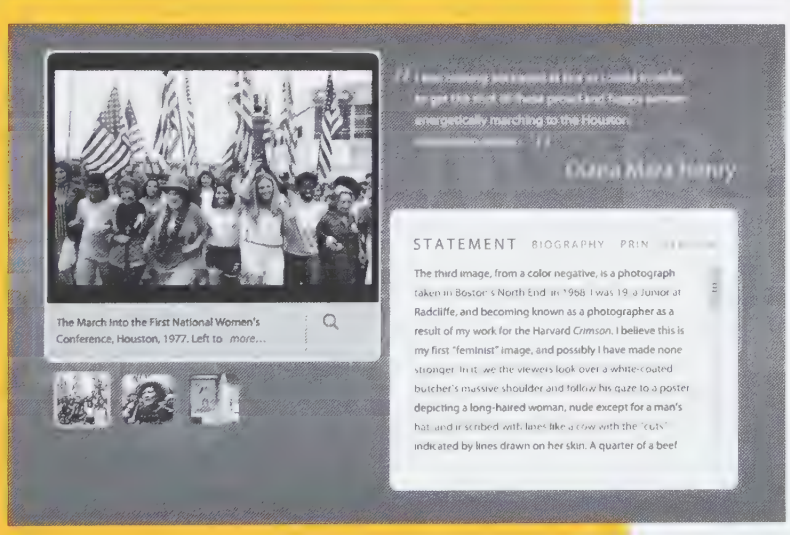
—Eleanor J. Bader

Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution

Want to know what took place when, in the 35 years since the current wave of feminist activism began? Want to be able to search by name for a Jewish woman active in the movement for women's liberation? Wonder what the movement was all about? An astonishingly comprehensive new project launched by the Jewish Women's Archive offers some answers.

"Jewish women and the feminist revolution" at www.jwa.org opens with the statement that "As activists, professionals, artists and intellectuals, Jewish feminists have shaped every aspect of American life. Drawing on the insights of feminism, they have also transformed the Jewish community....In this online exhibit, you will discover the powerful contributions of Jewish feminists through their own words and historical artifacts."


Heather Booth playing guitar for Fannie Lou Hamer during the Freedom Summer more...
Heather Booth
STATEMENT
I grew up in a family that had good social values reflected in our Jewish heritage, culture, and history. When I was growing up, at one point I wanted to be a rabbi, but was told at that time women couldn't be rabbis. I went to Israel when I graduated from high school in 1963, and the experience of Yad Vashem (the holocaust museum) had a transforming effect on me. I promised myself that in the face of injustice I would struggle for justice.
In 1964, at the end of my first semester of college, I went to

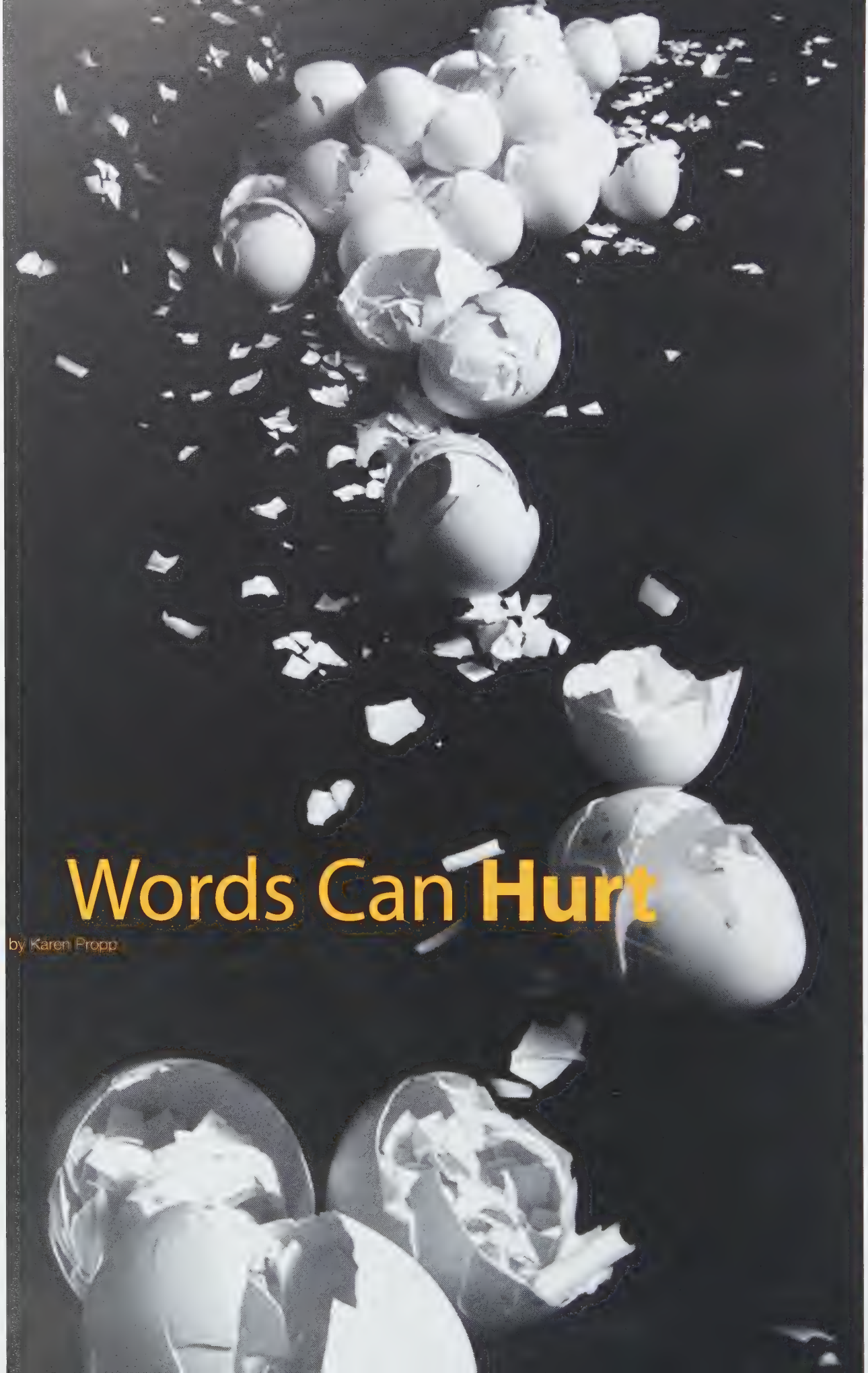

The March Into the First National Women's Conference, Houston, 1977. Left to more...
Diana Mara Henry
STATEMENT BIOGRAPHY PRIN
The third image, from a color negative, is a photograph taken in Boston's North End in 1968. I was 19, a junior at Radcliffe, and becoming known as a photographer as a result of my work for the Harvard Crimson. I believe this is my first "feminist" image, and possibly I have made none stronger. In it, we the viewers look over a white-coated butcher's massive shoulder and follow his gaze to a poster depicting a long-haired woman, nude except for a man's hat, and inscribed with lines like a cow with the "cuts" indicated by lines drawn on her skin. A quarter of a beef

You can search the site by timeline, by person or topic, or by one of several themes, including "Feminism and Judaism," "Judaism and social justice," "Confronting power," "My career," and more. Many of the links will take you to statements by Jewish women (including Lilith board member **Barbara Dobkin**, Editor in Chief and founding mother **Susan Weidman Schneider**, and many Lilith authors) whose words and works have made them pioneers in the movement for women's rights, both within the Jewish world and in the larger community too. You can even spot the cover of Lilith's 1976 premier issue in the exhibit!

Sociologist **Valerie Oppenheimer** of University of California, Berkeley reports that today men are choosing as mates women who have completed their education.

The more education a woman has, the more likely she is to marry.

—Reported in Women's eNews 11/02/05



Words Can Hurt

by Karen Propp

CONCEPTUAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALIZA OLMERT "ALIZA OLMERT TIKKUN," AN EXHIBITION OF CONCEPTUAL PHOTOGRAPHS AND CONSTRUCTIONS, WILL BE PRESENTED AT THE ANN LOEB BRONFMAN GALLERY, AT WASHINGTON DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, SEPTEMBER 18, 2005 - JANUARY 30, 2006.

"Death and life is in the power of the tongue" —*Proverbs 18:21*

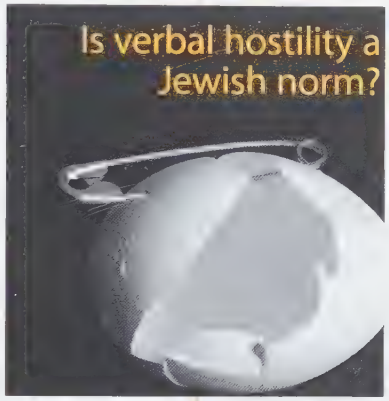
There it is in Proverbs: words can kill. Words can also debase, damage, degrade, hurt and abuse. Yet the wounding power of speech is so often forgotten by us Jews, especially in our family lives.

This is certainly true for my husband, trained as a rabbinical scholar, who does not often recognize the painful effects his abusive words (never fists) can have on me.

Last Wednesday, for example.

I set the table for supper. I set plates, forks, knives, napkins and glasses. I set out a bowl of tossed salad, a platter of grilled chicken, baguette on a board and a serrated knife to cut it. I poured seltzer into the drinking glasses. My husband came into the kitchen and looked at the table laden with food. "Where are the salad tongs?" he said.

"I can't find them. Who needs tongs anyway? Do you want a large spoon or just use your fork?" I admit, I was dismissive.



"How many times have I told you I like to use proper serving utensils?" I saw the vein throb in his neck. "Is that so difficult?"

"But—but—"

"But why can't we ever find anything in this damn kitchen!" With that he started pulling drawers open. He stuck in his hand and came up with an unidentifiable gadget. "What's this doing here? When's the last time you looked in this drawer? You never put things back where they belong. You hide things from me, I know."

Oh no, I thought. Here he goes again. And then I said what it has taken me 10 years to learn to say: "Stop. You can't blame me for that. It's your kitchen too."

Ten years to learn such simple phrases makes me a slow learner indeed. As the child of Holocaust survivors, I have always found silence a reasonable survival tactic when threatened. *Don't call attention to yourself. Play along. Hide in the cupboard until the soldiers have left.* I absorbed such messages by osmosis.

On the other hand, it has taken him 10 years to hear me, to close the drawer instead of provoking more argument. My husband grew up in a family that emphasized fighting for one's passions, whether building the state of Israel or righting an overcharge from the dress department at Marshall Field's. We know that while Jews in many lands were oppressed economically, forbidden to own land or engage in many trades, a facility with language was as much a survival technique for some as my own parents' silence was for them. In my husband's family, words were meant to be wielded as weapons against a hostile world, and when we were first married I thought that my reaction of panic and terror when he yelled at me was just a response to marked differences in our *styles* of communicating.

"Have you looked inside the dishwasher?" I ask my husband now.

Of course, the salad tongs are in the dishwasher. Looking sheepish, he washes and dries them and puts them in the salad bowl. "Sorry," he says. Then we sit down to supper.

The problem is, I still feel shaken by his outbreak. It takes several long minutes for my stomach to calm down enough for me to eat. He, on the other hand, is fine. To him we'd just had an unremarkable interaction. What he regards as the normal to and fro between consenting adults, I often find painful. We have a routine that goes like this:

He (hands slicing the air for emphasis, voice at high volume): "Jews socialize by arguing. It's who we are! You know the old joke—with two Jews, you get three opinions."

Me (hands folded, quietly outraged, slightly arch tone): "How can you say such a thing? That is not how I socialize. That's not who I am. It's tiring to argue all the time."

Mind you, there are those who point out that many Jews—especially Ashkenazi Jews—have verbal proclivities different from those of other people. In *I Say This Because I Love You,* Deborah Tannen writes of an American woman who says that after 25 years of marriage her Israeli husband still feels something is missing from their relationship because she refuses to fight with him. Cross-cultural experts such as Monica McGoldrick and Joseph Giordano, in their classic text *Ethnicity and Family Therapy,* counsel other therapists that Jewish couples who appear to be engaged in aggressive, articulate and even hostile verbal exchanges may in fact be following a cultural norm.

And so, in my home, we argue about arguing. What's more, his tactics include seasoning the cauldron of his anger with sarcasm (*I'll never say another word. Will that make you happy?*); yelling (*Can't you do anything right!*); mocking (*You're too sensitive*); and personal insult (*You're totally incompetent*). The rhetoric textbooks call such personal attacks *ad hominem* arguments. The domestic violence literature calls them verbal abuse.

In some households—like the one my husband grew up in—insults and high-decibel yelling are the routine modes of communication. So you may be surprised to know that the National Coalition Against Domestic Abuse defines verbal abuse—along with its emotional, financial and sexual counterparts—as domestic violence. Shelters for battered women will grant refuge to a woman who wants to leave a relationship that abuses her verbally, not just physically. Although verbal abuse often escalates to physical violence, it doesn't always. Verbal abuse that does not become physical is widespread. Experts estimate that nearly 40 percent of women will experience verbal abuse in their lifetime.

What about among Jews? Are Jewish husbands more likely to deliver tongue-lashings than push their wives down the stairs? Is it any less awful to be hurt by words than by a fist?

I'll answer my last question first. Studies (and my own experience) show that women who are abused with words experience *exactly the same psychological symptoms* as women who are abused with fists; increased depression, decreased self-

www.lilith.org

esteem. The answer is no. It is not any less awful to be hurt by words than by a fist. The tongue has power. Being verbally assaulted by your husband about misplaced salad tongs does make you feel unworthy and less confident, especially if the assault is only one wound in an ongoing slashing pattern of enraged put-downs, blame, shame, and free-floating anger.

The belief that Jewish husbands are non-violent runs counter to reality. Domestic abuse happens at exactly the same rate in the Jewish community as it does in the rest of the population—1 in 4 women. But one difference between Jews and non-Jews is how the abuse is handled and perceived. The *myth* that Jewish men don't beat their wives is actually dangerous because it makes it that much more difficult for a Jewish woman to admit abuse is happening to her and that much easier to deny. The pressure to have *shalom bayit*—peace in the home—can make the woman feel it's her fault if anger rules her home; I have felt this way myself many times in my decade-long marriage. And if she keeps kosher, it's more difficult for her to find an appropriate shelter. Perhaps because of these particular handicaps, Jewish woman stay five to seven years longer in an abusive relationship, on average, than do non-Jewish women.

Why do *I* stay? He and I share a history, a home and a child—none of which connections I can bear to break. Things do get better, often for months at a time. I see him trying to restrain his anger. I have not left because of inertia, fear and love. Because I continue to grow in the relationship. Because I believe in seeing things through.

The other question tugs at me. Are Jewish men more likely to deliver tongue-lashings than to push their wives down the stairs? Domestic violence agencies do not yet have data that compare the incidence of *verbal* abuse in Jewish households. Verbal and physical abuse are lumped under "domestic violence." But I think it does matter whether the pain comes from the tongue or the fist. For one thing, the problem demands that we Jews take another look at our much-prized verbal excellence, the proverbial lineage of Talmudists, lawyers, writers, professors, and public intellectuals.

I don't suggest that Jewish verbal abuse is inextricably linked to Jewish verbal excellence. But I think it's worth taking a look at how the two may derive from the same source. Can an analytic, critical mind turn his attention from a passage of law to domestic minutiae without becoming an overly critical person? When does a sharp wit become hurtful? To what degree can language be a carrier of suppressed violence? Surely we can continue to demonstrate brilliance in language without having this same verbal facility and acuity transmute into verbal violence.

Which brings me back to my husband. One of the qualities that first attracted me to him was his verbal prowess. After our first date I thought, "Finally I've found a man I can talk to." He reads everything and forgets nothing. He's done time in dialogue groups and therapists' offices. He speaks five languages. I had grown up in a secular home, and a part of me hungered to connect to my religion, so when I met my husband I wanted to learn from him. Among the many things I've learned is that nearly every detail in Jewish life can be disputed as well as dissected. What dishes to use when, the status of pasteurized wine, and even the exact time when day turns to night, ending Shabbat—all these are in dispute. These discriminations I find fascinating as well as exasperating. Unfortunately, deep inside the man whose verbal facility and rabbinical scholarship I so admired, I also found a poisonous rage, one reserved for the people with whom he is most intimate. He would wake me at four A.M. to blame me angrily for what was wrong with his life. Too often his wrath silenced me into shame and left me trembling.

Finally, I learned that if I wanted to live with him on tolerable terms, I had to break my habitual silence and say: "STOP!" I've had to restrain my tendency to please and learn by slow degrees to speak up. I've stayed with this man because I found that learning to bolster my sense of self was at least as profound as learning about my religious heritage. I've stayed because of the peaceful moments that surface and soothe; last summer we hiked a forest trail that smelled of pine and bathed our feet in a mountain stream. The sun warmed our backs then and I put my hand on his shoulder, for balance, and looked him full in the face—and I saw only kindness there. My tender feelings returned. His anger had vanished. We were whole.

Even so, I've placed pamphlets about verbal abuse in his hands. The other morning, I found him looking at one such pamphlet. "Okay, okay, I get it," he said. "But what about the class thing? "

"Nope," I say. I am standing in the doorway, conscious that I am taller than he as he sits at his desk. "Abuse takes place in every class."

I see him blanch. "Even."

"Professional, educated- couples."

"I'd have to see the numbers," he says. "Hasn't anyone done research to control for class? What kind of data is there for these claims?"

"I don't think the focus is exactly on socio-economics," I say. "I think the focus is on breaking the myth. Nicole Lesser, director of Kol Isha, the domestic violence prevention program in Boston, says an abusive person will use whatever he has—if it's verbal skill, he'll use that."

The conversation is almost over, but I can no longer keep up the disinterested façade we've both been maintaining. I cross my arms across my chest. "You don't think you have a problem, do you?"

He grips his coffee cup. His lip curls. "I *might* have a problem, okay?"

Any farther and I'll have pushed too far, I know. ●

Karen Propp is the co-editor of the anthology *Why I'm Still Married: Women Write Their Hearts Out on Love, Loss, and Who Does the Dishes* (Hudson Street Press/Penguin, 2005). She has also published two memoirs.

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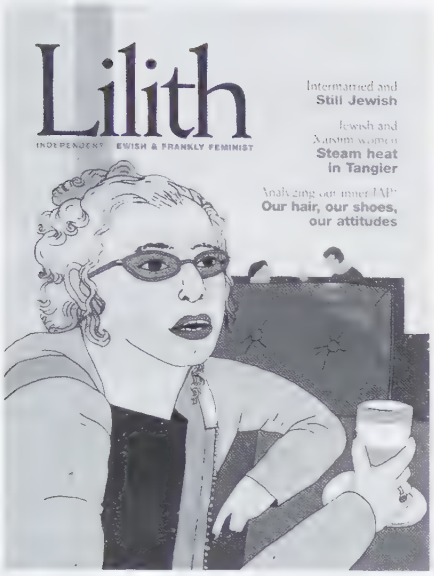
Lilith
INDEPENDENT JEWISH & FRANKLY FEMINIST
Intermarried and Still Jewish
Steam heat in Tangier
Our hair, our shoes, our attitudes

Treating violence in Jewish families

It was so gratifying to read Letty Cottin Pogrebin's clear, caring and accurate article: "Misery Beyond the Mezzuzah: Relationship Abuse in the Jewish Community" [Summer 2005]. I wanted to assure your readership **that no one needs to suffer alone or in silence.** Many communities have therapists specializing in Jewish domestic violence. We at the Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services are available in the New York City area. Our website is www.jbfcs.org and I can be reached directly at fwilbur@jbfcs.org.

Faye Wilbur, LCSW
New York NY

What's likely to yield Jewish kids in an intermarriage

I was honored to have my dissertation, "Still Jewish: A History of Women and Intermarriage in America," featured in an article by Jeri Zeder ("Still Jewish! What It Means Now to Be a Jewish Woman in an Interfaith Marriage", Summer 2005). I applaud LILITH for helping spread the word that intermarried Jewish women were not "lost."

Given the (necessarily) brief treatment of a very complex topic, I feel compelled to clarify certain subtleties for the sake of historical accuracy. Zeder commented about [writer] Mary Antin: "Though not quite Jewish, Antin did not embrace Christianity." The evidence actually suggests a coalescence of religious identities that defies simple categorization; Antin both claimed the Jewish badge *and* accepted some of the precepts of other religions, including Christianity.

Zeder's idea that intermarried women's self-definitions of their homes as Jewish "sidesteps the question of Jewish continuity—a subject McGinity did not intend her thesis to address" is contradicted by the women who married in the late twentieth century, claimed Jewish identities *and* passed Judaism on to their children. While the meaning and representation of intermarriage were the primary foci of my project, I use the assimilation versus transformation debate as a framework to expand the parameters of discussion. Rather than "sidestep" the issue, **I move beyond the continuity debate to explore how gender politics in intermarried women's lives impacted their experiences over time.** I also discuss the children of intermarriage, citing scholarship suggesting that the presence of Jewish mothers married to Gentile men in intermarried households was a stronger predictor of Jewish identification than was non-Jewish mothers married to Jewish men.

Keren R. McGinity
Providence RI

Israel and kibbutz in the 1970's—less "plasticness" than the USA

I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed the Fall issue of Lilith. I particularly enjoyed Shala Erlich's article, "Our Bodies, Our Selves." I first met up with OBOS in 1975, as a freshman at the University of Vermont, in a course in human sexuality. It was an eye-opening year for me, and OBOS has stayed with me since then, even assisting my daughter in writing papers for her sex education class in elementary school.

Until reading Shala's article, I didn't think about how deeply the book affected me, but **I find myself today, as a physical therapist, trying to help my patients, especially women, to understand all the workings of their bodies, taking responsibility for themselves physically** and respecting themselves by taking better care of themselves, physically and emotionally. I do think that OBOS had a lot to do with that important base.

As for the photos, I also loved the homey, some slightly fuzzy, photos in the original editions and especially the cover, and am sad at the change. But for me, it goes along with so many things that I see in the world today—the plasticness, the "professionalism," everything dressed up (by the way, one of the things that drew me to Israel and kibbutz in the 1970's was the relative simplicity and non-plasticity as compared to the USA—now it's here, too!)...so I sigh and am grateful to hear that at least the content has remained real.

Thank you, Lilith and staff, for visiting me four times a year!

Jodi Groberg Hodrov
Kibbutz Machanayim, Israel

LILITH welcomes comments from readers. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity.

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Lea Goldberg forgotten foremother

by Ilana Kurshan

My days are engraved in my poems/ like years in the rings of a tree writes Lea Goldberg (1911-1970), one of Israel's classic poets and the author of ten collections of verse. Raised in Russia and Lithuania, Goldberg received a Ph.D. in Semitic studies in Germany before she emigrated to Palestine in 1935. She lived first in Tel Aviv, where she worked as an editor and theater consultant, and then in Jerusalem, where she established Hebrew University's Department of Comparative Literature. But Goldberg never forgot her formative years in Europe, and she writes poignantly of the "heartache of two homelands" in verses that span not just two continents, but the full landscape of the human heart. Her recently released *Selected Poetry and Drama* (Toby Press, 2005, $14.95), poetry translated by Rachel Tzvia Black and prose by T. Carmi, offers many English-speaking readers their first chance to know this remarkable woman and writer.

Perhaps because she left her homeland and never returned, childhood for Goldberg is an enchanted fairy-tale world which she accesses primarily through her imagination: "Seven kid goats wait for their mother, / a queen pricks her finger on a needle, / seven dwarfs celebrate their day, / and the island is a palace, the mirror a lake / where a ship with a high mast sails — / and a girl—content Cinderella— / little girl on a white ship / sets sail for another land." Even Jerusalem is a "pretend city," not because it is enchanted but because it is both earthly and heavenly: its streets are trampled by poor children, but its sky is shadowed by the city's lofty past.

In many of Goldberg's poems, the images are primarily textual rather than visual; they appeal not to the eye that sees, but to the ear in which lines resound in verse. Her love poems echo the Song of Songs; her poems of loneliness and despair draw on Ecclesiastes. Many of these allusions are familiar even in translation: "And you know: every day is the last under the sun, / and you know: Every day is new under the sun." For others, we are dependent on the editor's thorough endnotes in order to appreciate the full resonance of Goldberg's lines; the English word "how," for instance, is far less resonant than "Eicha," the Hebrew title of the book of Lamentations: "How can one lone bird / carry the entire sky / on fragile / wings / above the desolation?"

Unusual among Israeli poets of her generation, Goldberg's poetry bears close ties to the western European literary tradition. She translated Shakespeare and Petrarch into Hebrew, as well as Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Gorky. And so, not surprisingly, her allusions are not just biblical and religious, but also mythological and European. "The Lament of Odysseus," for instance, is a description of the hero's descent into the underworld, in which each stanza closes with a refrain from David's tragic lament for Jonathan: "How the mighty have fallen."

Goldberg writes poignantly of her intimate acquaintance with loneliness and sorrow—spurred, presumably, by her own many early dislocations—but her most striking and powerful poems are those in which she nonetheless asserts her ability to carry herself forwards with stateliness and grace: "The paths I have trod / have straightened my stride— / tired and lovely steps." She never loses her ability to find beauty in the natural world, even when she is in great pain: "The stars are very beautiful / even tonight / the night of my anguish." In "Toward Myself," one of the most breathtaking poems in this collection, she majestically asserts, "The years have made up my face / with memories of love / and have adorned my hair with light silver threads / making me most beautiful." For Goldberg, who prays "O let me die with my eyes wide open," life is always a blessing.

Although she is most famous as a poet, Lea Goldberg also wrote three plays. In *Selected Poetry and Drama*, the selection of Goldberg's poetry is followed by the only one of her plays that was ever published and produced, "Lady of the Castle," which is performed from time to time in America to original music composed by Mira Spektor. The plot is extraordinary both for its Gothic qualities and its convoluted compassion. Set in September 1947, it is the story of two emissaries from Pales-

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Toward Myself

The years have made up my face
with memories of love
and have adorned my hair with light silver threads
making me most beautiful.

In my eyes
landscapes are reflected.
And the paths I have trod
have straightened my stride—
tired and lovely steps.

If you should see me now
you would not recognize your yesterdays—
I am walking toward myself
bearing the face you searched for in vain
when I was walking toward you.

tine who spend a night in a castle in an unidentified country in Central Europe. In need of lodgings on a stormy night, Dora Ringel and Michael Sand find themselves imposing on the hospitality of the reluctant Count Zabrodsky, the caretaker of the castle. Dr. Ringel, a Youth Aliya worker on a mission to find children kept in hiding during the war and bring them to Palestine, and Sand, in search of valuable Jewish books abandoned by Jews forced to flee their homes, make a surprising discovery behind the castle's bookcase-lined wall. Sand, the son of a watchmaker, is fascinated by the exotic cuckoo clock in his bedroom. He winds the clock, it strikes ten times, and then, to his utter astonishment, a beautiful girl in a long white gown emerges from behind a secret door. She is Lena, a Jew who has been kept in hiding by the Count for four years. Sand and Dora discover that the Count has held Lena captive not just during the war, but for two subsequent years of peacetime as well. He is unable to release her, even as she is torn apart by the excruciating difficulty of leaving the familiar for the terrifyingly unknown.

Goldberg's drama often becomes melodrama, but we do not groan at these effects, because they are so deftly woven into the historical narrative. Yes, Lena threatens to kill herself by swallowing poison, but it is the poison she wears in an amulet around her neck, which many Jewish parents gave to their children during the war so that they might end their own lives rather than die at the hands of the Nazis. Yes, the captive girl leans out the castle window and utters a howling cry at catching her first glimpse of the moon (which bathes her in its light, making her appear like a vision); but it is because she has been confined indoors for years as one of those hidden Jewish children whose Christian benefactors had no intention of returning them to their people after the war.

This book is a gift to readers of Goldberg, who can see more clearly the connections she draws between history and verse. Lena we now recognize as the Lea of the poems, the "little girl in a white ship" who "sets sail for another land."

To a Portrait of My Mother

Your portrait is so peaceful. You are other:
a bit proud and embarrassed at being—my mother.
Accompanying me with a yielding smile and a tear
and never asking: "Who?"

You never wondered, never raged, when I came
daily demanding: "Give me!"
With your own hands you brought me everything
only because I am—me.

And today you remember, more than I do,
my childhood sorrows, then you already understood:
when your grown daughter would come to you,
she would bring her grief that has grown too.

Yes. I'll come broken and not ask how you are.
I'll not cry in your arms, not whisper: "Mama!"
You'll know:
He who left me was dearer to me than you are,
and you won't ask: "Who?"

From My Mother's House

My mother's mother died
in the spring of her days. And her daughter
did not remember her face. Her image
engraved on my grandfather's heart
was erased from the world of images
after his death.

Only her mirror remained in the house,
grown deeper with age in its silver frame.
And I, her pale granddaughter, who look nothing like her,
peer into it today as though into
a lake hiding its treasures
deep under the water.

Deep down, behind my eyes,
I see a young woman
pink-cheeked and smiling.
A wig on her head.
She is hanging
a long earring on her ear-lobe. Threading it through
the slender crevice in the tender flesh
of her ear.

Deep down, behind my eyes, the light
golden flecks of her eyes shine.
And the mirror testifies to the family
tradition:
that she was very beautiful.

Variables

a short story by Elizabeth Edelglass

8:46 a.m. It is taking Annie longer to settle the twins in front of TV than she planned. Hannah wants her breakfast toast in triangles, while Esther doesn't want hers toasted at all, but the bread is frozen, so Annie has laid Esther's slices atop the warm toaster and bends towards the heat counting seconds, *one one thousand, two one thousand*...She's learned that precisely four seconds on each side will produce bread that is thawed but still cool, almost like fresh from the store.

Annie will not be going to the store today, nor taking the girls to pre-school although they've asked why not—what holiday is it?—will there be matzah balls? Usually holidays have craft projects at school—pink Mother's Day cards just last week, surely Father's Day cards in June although the teachers try to be sensitive.

"Bake now," the girls insist, remembering helping make Hamentaschen for Purim back in March, while Annie brandishes a butter knife urging cream cheese, jelly, *just choose*. They stand in their underwear—that's as far as they've gotten—hands on hips, staring at Annie through slivered-almond eyes. They made unusual Queen Esthers at the temple Purim party—honey-skinned Korean girls in a sea of frizzy hair and freckles. At the store, obnoxious people still stop to ask *Are they yours?*

Neither girl has brushed her teeth, and Annie is still in what passes lately for pajamas, sweats and one of Bryan's old Penn tees, wrapped in a ridiculous lacy robe she bought for the hospital one of the times they tried for a baby. The tee is paint-speckled, which would have pissed Bryan off. She sleeps in work clothes now, the line between asleep and awake comfortably blurred.

Annie is a quilter, but not like the quilts her great-grandma used to sew on the pedal machine in her basement tailor shop in East New York. Annie once quilted yards of silk she'd painted with golden rooftops of Jerusalem. Another time she made a patchwork entirely of airplane tickets and baggage-claim tags. Lately, she's working on a series she calls *list quilts*, using fabric markers to sort her life into orderly lists, then covering all with intricate geometric patterns of stitching—order from chaos.

9:03 a.m. Annie finally makes her way to the living room, although living room seems a misnomer nowadays. Work—once confined to what was the spare bedroom before the twins—has taken over, quilts in various stages of completion, furniture pushed aside to make room for a cutting table and quilting frames, even a small printing press purchased with some of the money.

From her stool, Annie eyes the girls on the couch in what used to be the dining room, dismantled dining table in the basement now, holidays back at her mother's. They have Sesame Street on TV—she taped the 7:00a.m. show in anticipation. Their plates—toast and non-toast—spill crumbs onto the carpet. No breakfast for Annie today, just a glass of orange juice while she works; it was Bryan who touted to her the healing qualities of vitamin C.

By the time she's retrieved the portable TV from the kitchen, located an outlet to plug it in, and clicked it on, she's missed the beginning of the broadcast, doesn't know who's talking. She thought the hearing was scheduled to start at 9:00 but could have gotten that wrong. The man's voice is steady and even, like the tiny stitches she begins adding to the layered muslin stretched before her, but his words pummel her body like falling bricks.

He's talking about the South Tower, as if the delivery of the report has been synchronized to the actual events. And there is the video, which Annie has seen so often it is seared inside her eyelids, materializing when she closes her eyes in bed, trying for sleep. Like the photo of Bryan she's scanned and digitized onto the fabric in front of her—faded shades of brown, like a daguerreotype of one of her stern Russian ancestors. Bryan, yet not Bryan, his bits somehow reassembled through the miracle of cyberspace. Cyberspace is one of the things Annie used to have faith in, unlike her mother, who'll send an e-mail then phone to see if she's received it.

"Airplane," Hannah calls out.

"Fuck," Esther responds.

Annie opens her eyes. Have they caught sight of her TV? Sesame Street was intended to hold their attention. No, it's just the Count counting vehicles—cars, trains,

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Bryan came back with her swaddled in his T-shirt, her feet through the armholes.

airplanes—even Sesame Street is synchronized this morning. Esther has trouble with initial consonant blends, cannot say truck. *Fuck*, Annie silently agrees. *Fuck, fuck, fuck.*

Smoke rises on TV, and flames, and indescribable things falling from great heights, as if any moment now the parachutes will open. And the droning voice:

They agreed to wait for the FDNY to arrive before determining whether to evacuate the South Tower. According to one fire chief, it was unimaginable, "beyond our consciousness," that another plane might hit...

Who is this man with a face as blank as the TV screen if she crawled under her work table to yank the plug from the wall? Where are Katie and Matt when Annie needs them, perky and reliable, Katie flashing her shiny-lipstick smile across the screen every morning? How does she keep smiling like that, after all she's been through?

Annie tries to ignore the telephone. The machine will pick up after seven rings. They used to have it set on four. Before the girls, she and Bryan could always reach the phone by four rings, unless they were making love. *What if it's important?* Annie'd say. *What if it's your mother?* Bryan would reply, lifting his tongue from her nipple or pausing mid-thrust.

Annie's mother works at home, too, at her kitchen table, writing travel stories (gleaned from the Internet, not from actual travel) and comic essays that run next to real estate ads in the local weekly. She says she gave Annie her creative genes, yet spends an inordinate amount of time watching daytime television, calling Annie with tips from morning talk shows.

"Are you watching?" Annie's mother says now.

"I'm trying, Mom. Until you called."

"Don't watch. You shouldn't even be home. You should be taking the girls to school, like an ordinary day."

"Then why did you call?"

"Because I knew you'd be watching." Her mother has become a font of mixed messages, questioning why Annie never went to temple Friday nights to say kaddish while simultaneously advocating mind over matter, positive thinking.

Annie hangs up, grasps her glass. There is vodka in her orange juice, just this once, and an ache beginning to form at the base of her stomach like she's getting her period, her relentless period.

On an early list quilt, Annie commemorated the trip to Korea she and Bryan had planned to pick up the twins.

Supplies:
toilet paper
pop-top tuna
Pampers
formula
ten-dollar bills

Travel:
27 hours
2 plane changes
9 bottles water
2 mini-bottles red wine
2 sleeping pills
11 bathrooms
3 weeks in Korea (unfamiliar as the moon)

Except all this was imaginary, patched together from:
newspapers
TV
Internet chats
magazine articles in supermarket checkout lines

In real life, Annie and Bryan played it safe, paid an exorbitant amount—*highway robbery* her mother said—to have the twins delivered to JFK by adoption courier, a small neat woman with graying hair and an aura of calm, the epitome of a grandma. Here's what Annie brought to the airport:

2 car seats with pink gingham covers
Pampers, sizes 1 and 2
2 stuffed pandas (a gift from her mother who seemed to think the girls were coming from China)
2 pairs of arms to hold her babies

And what she forgot:
Pampers newborns (naturally, she guessed wrong)
change of clothes for babies
change of clothes for parents
extra pair of arms (her mother's, perhaps?)

"They'll get used to us," Bryan said that day, speeding home up I-95, Annie in the back wedged between squalling wraiths in plastic seats. Hannah barfed, and Annie held out her hand to catch, nearly barfed herself. Then Esther pooped a yellow-green slime out her too-large diaper and down her legs, soaking the sleeper she'd arrived in and her pretty gingham seat cover.

"What were we thinking?" Annie cried.

"We'll go one-on-one," Bryan soothed. "Man-to-man defense."

Then he swung into the Darien rest stop, carried Esther under her armpits to the men's room, came back with her washed and swaddled in his T-shirt, her feet through the armholes, the big blue PENN upside down, PE up one leg, NN

down the other. He stuck to the speed limit the rest of the way home, driving bare-chested, brown hairs curling across his pale shoulders.

Here's the list below Bryan's face on the quilt in front of Annie today:

6 months (how old the twins were when they came)
1 month (how long they had Bryan for a Daddy)
2 years, 8 months, 11 days (without Bryan)

This is her attempt at facts, basic essentials, the truth. Except the minute she recorded the last—in indelible ink—it was already wrong, because it changes every day. What was that called back in high school algebra? A variable, the number that always eluded her.

Around 9:15 a.m.

A different man on TV now:

As we were about to exit the building through the turnstile, the security guard looks at me and says, "Where are you going?" I said, "Well, I am going home." "Why?" "I saw fireballs coming down." "No, your building is safe and secure. Go back to your office."

Safe and secure. These are the words he says. He's looking straight into the camera, his face real, not an illusion of cyberspace. He must have gone home, must not have believed. Annie picks up a marker, pens *safe* next to Bryan's face, *secure*, a list of important *s* words…

semblance
story
sham

In the un-dining room, Hannah sleeps on the couch, wet thumb slipped out onto her chin. Esther has gone to pee; Annie listens for the flush.

"I thought you were going out," her mother says, second call of the morning.

"Then why do you keep calling?" Annie takes a slug of OJ, bitter and sweet. How long has Esther been in the bathroom? "Estie?" she hollers. "You all right in there?" Hannah rolls over on the couch. Big Bird's squeaky voice worries about something on the kids' TV. Esther has diarrhea sometimes, doesn't allow help wiping.

"Something wrong with Esther?"

"Nothing's wrong. I'm hanging up now."

"If you don't want to talk, why do you keep picking up?" Then, as if remembering who she's talking to, "Do you want me to come over? I could come." She's switched to her careful voice that makes babies sleep and repairmen come on time.

"Don't come."

Annie was alone that day, too, except for the girls. Alone is never quite the same after children. She'd finally settled them into their swings in front of a *Baby Einstein* video, was just stepping into the shower when she heard the phone and ignored it, let the machine pick up. *I'm OK* she heard Bryan say into the tape. Funny how any conversation that begins with *I'm OK* must really mean *I'm not OK*. By the time she reached the phone, there was only a dial tone and a trail of wet footprints across the carpet.

Then her mother called, just like today, with the same conflicting advice. "Is your TV on? Don't turn it on. Oh my God, did you see that? Don't watch." And finally, "I'll be there in five minutes," even though on any other day the drive would take fifteen.

"What are you doing right this minute?" her mother says now.

"Trying to work, but I'm a little distracted."

"By the TV, right?"

"No, by you, Mom. Why aren't *you* working?" Annie listens for the telltale tapping of her mother's fingers on her kitchen-table laptop. "You're not writing this down, are you?" she says, "for one of your stories?"

"Who'd believe such a story?"

The TV timeline, at first orderly, minute-by-minute, is now as chaotic and disorienting as when it really happened. The vodka in Annie's orange juice dulls the jagged words, yet disguises them so they pierce her skin when she least expects it.

By 9:30 a.m., a number of civilians who had failed to reach the roof and could not descend because of intensifying smoke became trapped on the 105th floor.

But then:

At approximately 9:07 a.m., two chiefs commenced operations in the South Tower lobby.

Then:

At 9:50 a.m., a ladder company had made its way up to the 70th floor…

And then, somehow:

At 9:06 a.m., the NYPD Chief of Department instructed that no units were to land on the roof…

And then:

At 9:37 A.M., a civilian on the 106th floor of the South Tower reported to a 9-1-1 operator that a lower floor—"90-something floor"—was collapsing.

Outside, a lawnmower roars past. To the gardener, today is just another Tuesday. Annie raises the TV volume. If she can hear better, perhaps the words will make sense. Next to Bryan's face she begins marking her list of reasons he shouldn't have been there:

He overslept after being up with the girls' croup
His train broke down outside Grand Central
He stayed in Connecticut that day for a job interview

Bryan *had* promised to switch jobs closer to home, but hadn't gotten around to it yet.

(continued on page 27)

Through a Different Lens

Women Bring the News from Israel

by Helen Schary Motro

When Israeli journalist **Inna Shapiro** was commissioned by the Israeli newspaper Haaretz to write a feature about the Intifada, *she chose as her subject Alecia Sorokin, newly arrived as an immigrant from Russia. Alecia was a nurse and a wife –and mother of Sasha, a five-year-old with an angelic face. In May 2001 a terrorist bomb exploded as Sasha entered a Netanya mall along with his parents and sent him to the intensive care unit. Alecia was seriously injured, suffering extensive burns and two broken legs. Shapiro followed Alecia on the difficult journey of physical and emotional rehabilitation. She also explored Alecia's sad new status: since Sasha's father was instantly killed by the bomb, Alecia was no longer just a new immigrant to Israel, but also a young widow. Shapiro called her story "One Year in Israel."*

Shapiro was not alone in focusing on Alecia to symbolize the tragedy of human loss in Israel. ***Deborah Sontag****, New York Times correspondent at the time, wrote a dramatic piece about the family headlined "In a Fatal Flash, Immigrant Dreams Turn to Dust." The Netanya bomb had killed five and injured over a hundred, yet both women journalists chose to focus on the human element of little Sasha and his parents.*

Lilith asked some of the numerous women in the media who cover the Israeli/Palestinian conflict: Do they have a unique viewpoint, experience, and approach, influenced by gender?

Shapiro is a correspondent for Haaretz and an independent TV producer working on Mideast current events programs for foreign networks, including PBS's NewsHour. For Israel-based Shapiro, as for most of the women reporting on Palestinian/Israeli relations, trips into the occupied territories have been routine, even at the height of the Intifada.

Often she hurries back at the end of the day to drive her young son to his after-school activities. That connection made the human cost of the separation fence being built by the Israelis come alive for her.

On assignment for the NewsHour, Shapiro, 43, attended a screening of "The Apartheid Wall," a presentation by the Palestinian Authority. On a cognitive level, Shapiro understood the hardships it showed, like peasants separated from their fields. However, it was a chance conversation with a Palestinian woman journalist that made some of the consequences of the wall hit home, no matter its political or security functions.

"Because of the route of the wall, it took me an hour to drive my kids to school this morning," the Palestinian told her.

"I saw myself," said Shapiro, "how I would have gone crazy to take my own child to school one hour in each direction." This woman's story was included in the report; episodes where Shapiro encountered Palestinian women in situations she could relate to made her "understand in my guts that what they want is a 'normal life'."

When asked if female correspondents have a different agenda, Shapiro's first reaction was a resounding no, but then she corrected herself. "For example, I once wrote a piece about Russian immigrants injured during the Intifada. Although I didn't say to myself, 'I will plan to interview women,' it was three women I decided to interview. Was it a coincidence? I don't think so."

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Above: Kibbutz Nahal Oz, Israel, Sept. 28, 2005. Reut Unger asks soldiers not to fire their artillery while her wedding takes place near the border with Gaza. (Rina Castelnuovo/ The New York Times)

Left: Netzarim, Gaza Strip, August 23, 2005. Israeli soldiers cry as they watch from the women's section of the Netzarim synagogue as the Torah scrolls are removed from the ark during the forced evacuation of the last Jewish settlement in Gaza. (Rina Castelnuovo/ The New York Times)

Rina Castelnuovo is a pioneering Israeli photojournalist. A contract photographer for The New York Times for the last nine years, whose photos have made page one of the paper, Castelnuovo talks with humor mixed with determination. "When I began taking pictures, I was consumed with the idea I have to prove I can do it just as well as my male colleagues. That was two decades ago, and there were just a few of us trying our luck in this male-dominated profession."

Although "things are different today" insists Castelnuovo, when she started out as one of the four women photographers accompanying the Israeli army into Lebanon in the early 80's, "there are things I did then which I regret and would never do them today…In particular, while six months pregnant with the second of my three daughters, I accepted an assignment to travel as the sole photographer with Israeli troops withdrawing to new lines from the north to Southern Lebanon. It was supposed to be a short mission, relatively easy. It turned into an overnight ordeal where we ended up being stranded along with hundreds of soldiers, waiting for the order to pull out while being attacked with Katyusha rockets." And yet Castelnuovo is adamant that "When we cover horror, war, bombings, funerals, there is no difference in approach. Being a woman you have no exclusivity over compassion, tears, or fear compared to a male colleague.

"[When starting out] my driving force was a phrase I often heard at home while growing up with parents who were survivors of the Holocaust and Nazi death camps. 'If only the world knew…' Yet maturing and becoming a professional, I know the world knew then, and it does know today, of peoples' suffering and injustice. It is naïve today to believe we can make a huge difference. But what we can do is make sure that those issues remain…in the world public eye."

Castelnuovo recounts her recent experience with the Israeli disengagement from Gaza in August to illustrate that if sex discrimination is gone from the profession, it is still a reality in society.

She was photographing the synagogues where protesting settlers had barricaded themselves in. "Despite the fact that those were the very last moments of Jewish presence inside those synagogues, most of them stripped of any religious objects, I didn't think at the time I would be breaking any religious code because of my gender. To my great surprise I was chased out from the men's floor and sent to the women's floor (Ezrat Nashim)."

With wry humor she observes that "I even momentarily united settlers and soldiers—both took time off from struggling with each other and in one voice ordered me to go to where I belong...in Ezrat Nashim, where nothing much was happening as most women and girls were busy looking at the forced evacuation of the young men below....Here I needed my experience and patience to sneak back in when all were too busy scuffling, which I did, sometimes successfully, mostly not..."

"Although the new openness of Israeli society has lessened discrimination against women in the media so that there are now reporters, correspondents, and editors at all levels," says journalist and law professor **Dr. Ilana Dayan**, "there is still not even one single woman in senior management position." She ascribes this to Israel's "militaristic ethos creating a male bias."

Dayan's intensity and intelligence characterize the top-rated radio and television news programs she hosts. Dayan teaches freedom-of-speech law at Tel Aviv University.

When addressing Israeli/Palestinian issues, Dayan feels "the national dimension is so strong and so seminal that it overshadows gender. The fact that you are an *Israeli* reporter is more important than if you are a man or a woman."

"In the Middle East you must be careful with boundaries," stresses **Kimberly Dozier**, 39, the outspoken and eloquent Jerusalem-based correspondent for CBS Evening News, who told Lilith that being a woman reporting from the Middle East "opens some doors and closes others—you can get in where men can't go—to see the women cooking in the back room who in actuality are the head of the household—they give a picture of the heart of society."

Dozier, who arrived in Israel at the height of the Intifada, is now concentrating more on the conflict in Iraq but continues to cover stories such as the Gaza disengagement and the Palestinian elections. She says that religious law and its impact on women is the one paramount issue to which Jewish and Muslim women both relate. Ironically, it was Jewish women who stepped in to rescue the non-Jewish Dozier when she was physically assaulted by a man while she was being filmed for a story in the ultra-Orthodox Mea Shearim section of Jerusalem after a suicide bombing. Bearing out her misgivings about the timing and location of the piece, a large crowd formed as a general power outage brought people out on the streets gathering around her and gawking. Although Dozier made sure to cover her shoulders and elbows in deference to dictates of religious modesty, an onlooker was apparently angered by her blond hair.

"A phrase I often heard growing up with parents who were survivors of the Holocaust was 'If only the world knew…'"

"Shiksa, shiksa!" he shouted and hurled the heavy camera case at her head, knocking her against a wall. Everybody in the crowd stood frozen—until women suddenly started clucking and spontaneously banded together to assist Dozier back to her car.

"We have to get used to helping other women." Dozier, a Wellesley graduate, claimed that her CBS colleagues who went to women's colleges have acquired an ethic of supporting women. This viewpoint is reiterated by Fox News Channel Jerusalem correspondent **Jennifer Griffin**, 36, a 1992 Harvard graduate who spent years in a girls' school.

Griffin's two daughters were born during the six years she has been stationed in Israel. "I think being a woman allows me to tell stories in a more empathetic, emotional way. There was one story I did on how at a checkpoint in the West Bank (near Nablus) two nights in a row pregnant Palestinian women trying to get to a hospital to give birth were shot at by the soldiers—

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New books about "The Situation" in Israel

The *matsav*—"the situation," Israelis' shorthand term that covers any and all aspects of Israeli/Palestinian conflict—refers to the existential problem pervading almost every sector of life in Israel: friction, hope, violence, fighting, attacks, retaliations, agreements, cease fires, programs, crises, and even historical analysis and political philosophy. **Maneuvering between the Headlines: An American Lives through the Intifada** (Other Press, 2005), is my own response to the *matsav*, a personal narrative of daily life amidst violence and tragedy, while at the same time documenting Israelis' continued hopes for coexistence. My identity as a Jewish woman who has made Israel her second home has forced me to make my peace with the hated gun my husband keeps for self-defense; to suppress my fears for my law students' physical safety—and their souls—when they are called up to army reserve duty in the occupied territories; and to struggle to give my teenage daughter a normal life while protecting her against dangers that have cut short so many young lives in the Middle East. Here is a sampling of other recent writing by women on the period since the outbreak of the second Intifada five years ago:

• **Stephanie Gutmann**, an American journalist with Israeli roots, writes forcefully, unabashedly and cynically from the point of view of the right. The powerful cover of her book **The Other War: Israelis Palestinians and the Struggle for Media Supremacy** (Encounter Books, 2005) shows a Palestinian youth in the act of hurling a stone, targeted not by Israelis, but by the numerous camera lenses of a tightly packed semi-circle of journalists. "I wrote this book because apparently people need to be reminded that pictures do lie," declares Gutmann. "It is impossible to separate the second Intifada from its coverage…[which] propelled events, was used to justify events, and amplified events. The second Intifada was intended for and could not have happened without an international audience."

With chapter titles like "If it bleeds, it leads," Gutmann exposes Palestinian media manipulation and the willingness of the liberal press to cast Israel in the role of criminal oppressor. Gutmann documents her travel through the West Bank driven by a engaging young Palestinian cleaner at her Jerusalem hotel whom she enlisted for the purpose. Unusual for an Arab, he had the "gaze of a man used to interacting with women as equals."

During her travels she met no harassment by Israeli soldiers, possibly because they "saw my purple T-shirts and floppy sun hats and dismissed me as one of a perennial but harmless fixture of the Mideast landscape, the female Arabist."

• **Next Year in Jerusalem** (New Press, 2005) by Israeli feminist, peace activist, and human rights professor **Daphna Golan-Agnon** stands in ideological contrast to Gutmann's book. This memoir of the "situation" includes her struggles to balance her political activities with the demands her family makes upon her, and the cold shoulder she sometimes has to tolerate from Palestinian women on whose behalf she works and writes.

• Even more left-leaning is the mordant polemic **The Question of Zion** by **Jacqueline Rose** (Princeton University Press, 2005), a British literature professor who argues that Zionism "gives us the unique opportunity to watch the militarization of suffering. "The "historical injustice" perpetrated against the Jews turned into "a narcissistic wound," leading Zionism to cause a two-pronged evil: becoming a "bearer of injustice toward an indigenous people" and inflicting a cost to "Israel's soul."

• As a Jewish American teenager, **Jennifer Miller** was moved by her participation at the Palestinian/Jewish summer camp Seeds of Peace. Returning to the Middle East years later, Miller, now 24, daughter of a senior American diplomat, found doors open to her at the highest places; along with her visits with other "Seeds," she was granted interviews with Shimon Peres, Colin Powell, and Ehud Barak. In Ramallah she interviewed Yassir Arafat; joining him for lunch afterwards, he cajoled her to eat. In **Inheriting the Holy Land: An American's Search for Hope in the Middle East**. (Ballantine Books, 2005), Miller tells of meeting young Jews and Palestinians in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. Daring to go to Gaza, Miller spent a fearful day in the rubble of refugee camps confronted with hatred, despair, and anti-Americanism, allowing her defenses down only after she crossed the Erez checkpoint back into Israel: "…the second I turned from the car, I erupted into tears. I knew it was best to shove back down whatever I was feeling, have my shower, and go to sleep, but once I felt the water over me, no amount of scrubbing seemed good enough. The grime of Gaza had sunk through my skin."

• At the other end of the age spectrum is **Lois Bar-Yaacov,** retired lecturer in literature at the Hebrew University, who wrote in a series of letters exchanged with American poet Adrienne Rich in 2003, quoted in the journal **Bridges**: "The stage is already strewn with corpses—ours and theirs—and will be strewn with far more while Jews from afar scold us from the safe room of their moral righteousness…I have been living in Israel for 54 years. I have seen history with my own eyes… what will come of this strange, fateful decision that the Jews will once more become a nation like all the nations, in a land which is defined by borders in real time?...My appeal to you and to other Jews who are naturally pursuing justice is not to see Israel in black and white."

—H.S.M.

Right: Jerusalem, May 22, 2005. Israeli protesters holding pictures of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard as first lady Laura Bush, left, with Gila Katsav, wife of Israeli president Moshe Katsav, leaves the Western Wall plaza. (Rina Castelnuovo/ The New York Times)

Opposite: Netzarim, Gaza Strip, August 22, 2005. A Jewish settler prior to leaving the settlement of Netzarim, the Gaza Strip's last Jewish settlement. (Rina Castelnuovo/ The New York Times)

"I can predict what the politician will say before the interview even begins. When I talk to real people you never know what you'll end up with."

—Jennifer Griffin, Fox News Jerusalem correspondent

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in one case her husband died as a result of the gunshots. That was a story that, as a new mother, I told in a very powerful way. There were also numerous examples [where I sat] across from the Israeli mother or father of a victim of a terror attack—and I was able to capture their loss in a way that really made a viewer feel that—and the senselessness of the death.

"I remember a case where I went to cover the Palestinian mother of a suicide gunman who'd attacked a settlement in Gaza. What was unique about this story is that this was the first mother to make a video with her son—kissing him on the head—sending him off on his 'mission' (to kill and be killed) with her blessing. This gave an incredible insight into the mentality of mothers who were influencing their sons to be "martyrs' on the Palestinian side. I think the stories I tell give a greater understanding of what motivates people—rightly or wrongly….Often it involves a lot of tears—both mine and theirs.

"My emphasis is always on the human story," says Griffin. "That's why I prefer interviewing real people—not politicians. I can predict what the politician will say before the interview even begins. When I talk to real people you never know what you'll end up with."

Being a leftist and a feminist are intrinsically tied together for controversial Haaretz correspondent **Amira Hass**, 49. "I cannot distinguish between them," she insists. "Both determine my approach, what interests me, and what annoys me most."

Hass took the unique step of not only reporting from the occupied territories, but actually going to live there—in Gaza from 1993, and since 1997 in Ramallah. Hass speaks in a low voice, with the conviction and determination that have made her a courageous hero to some, and an extremist to others: "Personally I feel privileged that I live according to my beliefs," she says, "I live a bi-national life in both communities." Her book *Drinking the Sea at Gaza* (Henry Holt, 2000) chronicles the Israeli occupation from the vantage point of peoples' lives and experiences.

She summarizes her prolific writings since 1991 for Haaretz as a systematic analysis of the Israeli policy of closure in the lands it conquered, controlling Palestinian freedom, depriving their movement, and planning a future Palestinian state as an accumulation of isolated enclaves." Hass considers her writing as one inspiration to other Israeli women who formed the organization Machsom Watch, in which volunteers—mostly middle aged women—stake themselves out at Israeli army checkpoints to document transgressions against Palestinians. Her gender has proved both a help and a liability. On the one hand, Palestinians are very suspicious of Israelis, but somehow less so of women: "A man couldn't have lived in Gaza with the same ease as I did." Hass's writing has met objections both from her Israeli paper and from the Palestinians she has interviewed. Her pessimistic reporting from the field during the Oslo years contradicted the popular perception that the peace process was surging ever forward, and although her reports were published, they were not highlighted.

"Male correspondents who came to the territories to report for one or two days got more attention for their 'bravery' than

I, who actually lived there. Maybe because men know better how to market themselves, whereas I thought it was sufficient that my content speak for itself."

Asked whether she feels solidarity with other women correspondents and individuals in the Middle East, Hass retorts, "Why only the Middle East? Why not the entire world?"

Judith Colp Rubin is co-author of *Yassir Arafat: A Political Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2003), and now writing a history of women in the Middle East. An American journalist with 18 years writing experience about the Middle East, she divides her time between a Washington suburb and living with her family in the heart of Tel Aviv. Asked whether her gender affects the content of her stories, Colp Rubin responds that "women are more likely to probe beneath the headlines and political activities to reveal something about the psychological makeup of the people involved. In writing about Yassir Arafat, I wanted to explore the impact on his life of having lost his mother at a young age and not marrying until he was well into his middle years. To me, this was just as important as his political activities."

But Colp Rubin, 43, was skeptical about whether gender per se can lead to closeness between nationalities: "Sometimes you can bond with another woman by bringing up the subject, for example, of raising children. But such a solidarity is fleeting. The differences within the Middle East are too great to make such bonds overcome the political differences—and everyone is politicized.

"I remember once interviewing a Palestinian woman in Nablus who was talking about her 14-year-old son. He had gotten up that morning and she had made him breakfast, urging him to finish all his food. I could certainly relate to that. But then he went off to a demonstration with his mother's consent and after throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers was fatally caught in the fire of bullets. I simply couldn't understand why she hadn't talked him out of going to that rally with the same emphasis with which she had urged him to finish his breakfast.

"Unfortunately, the majority of societies in the Middle East are very male-dominated, so however close you might get to a woman there is always some male figure, be it a husband, brother or father, lurking close behind. I believe any woman who does not know that will find out the hard way."

"The majority of societies in the Middle East are very male-dominated, however close you get to a woman there is always some male figure lurking close behind."

Isabel Kershner, Middle East editor of the Israeli magazine The Jerusalem Report, says she has been "received with respect in Palestinian society," yet maintains that a woman cannot become "too chummy" with Palestinian sources. Unlike her male colleagues, in that "traditional conservative culture" it would be a problem for her to develop a real relationship with men. Contact must remain on a very professional level, and she is "always conscious to have it not seem going beyond that."

Kershner is the author of the just-published book on the Israeli-built separation wall, *Barrier: The Seam of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2006). She defines herself as a feminist, saying she does not approach a story differently than a man would, but that being female can be an advantage, such as with her interviews with the families of two teenage Palestinian boys shot by a security guard. In that case, she says, being a woman definitely gave her access to their mothers, who would have been off limits to a male reporter.

On the other hand, she insists, for other stories like her analysis of the internal workings of the Fatah, the only hint of her gender would be in the byline. Her work often takes her across Israeli army checkpoints in the West Bank. "If a male gets in, I get in."

But Kershner, 41, who moved to Israel from her native England, points out her lack of equal access to Israeli intelligence sources as compared to her male colleagues. "I am not part of that network; I don't know if it's because I haven't been in the army, or because I am a woman."

"Israeli society has a way to go to accept a woman as equal to a man," asserts **Sharon Ashley**, editor of The Jerusalem Report. Ashley, 48, an American who has lived in Israel for the last quarter century, worked her way up at the magazine to become its editor in chief. Yet, although no woman today heads a mainstream Hebrew-language publication, women have achieved prominent positions in the media, and Ashley maintains that the Israeli public respects equally the reports of top women and men correspondents. But Israeli society is still in flux, "and hasn't yet been put to the test as to its perception of women," Ashley says.

Of the women reporting from Israel in English, a well-known voice to Americans is the one that signs off her National Public Radio dispatches with "**Linda Gradstein**, from Jerusalem." Gradstein says, "I have always had access to the men I needed to cover, including Hamas leaders such as Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (assassinated by Israel last year), but I have also had access to women, often access that my male counterparts don't have because traditional women—especially in Gaza—won't speak to men who are not part of their families…The only real problems I've experienced as a woman have been in the ultra-Orthodox community in Israel….However, I've usually been able to work it out."

For Gradstein, since 1990 an NPR correspondent in Jerusalem, where she lives with her husband and four children, being a woman has "for the most part" been an advantage. "Women tend to focus on the human story more than some of our male colleagues. I sometimes think the human story is the best way to get people who don't know much about the Middle East to understand this complicated, crazy place." ●

Helen Schary Motro is a columnist and lawyer teaching at Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law and author of *Maneuvering between the Headlines: An American Lives through the Intifada* (Other Press 2005). Motro's compelling book, her personal narrative of daily life amidst violence and tragedy, has been called an American Jewish woman's contemporary exploration of Zionism.

Variables

(continued from page 19)

9:59 a.m. The South Tower has fallen, windows peeling down like runs on a stocking. There's a smell of something burnt in the air—last night's macaroni and cheese? In the background, Elmo's voice signals Sesame Street is ending.

Hannah appears in the doorway. Annie mutes the sound, can't tear her eyes from the un-muted picture.

"Where's Esther?" Hannah inquires.

"In the bathroom." If Annie looks at her, she'll have to turn the TV off.

"No she's not."

"Yes she is."

"I just peed. She's not."

"The upstairs bathroom?"

"No. C'n I have some juice?" reaching for Annie's glass.

"Later." Annie gulps down what's left of her drink.

"Front door's open."

If no one is in the house to see, does the picture flickering across the TV screen still exist?

Annie is out the door, calling for Esther, before the needle she's left swinging from its thread comes to rest. The lawnmower passes through the front yard, a thundering tractor trailing razor-edged blades spinning so fast you can't see them, but you know they're there. Tom the gardener rides atop his perch, industrial earmuffs cradling his ears. "Esther!" Annie shrieks, "Estieeeee!" Tom doesn't flinch, rides on past as if she doesn't exist.

A tug on her robe and Annie scoops up Hannah. Before kids, could she have imagined the nearly weightless sensation of a sole three-year-old in her arms? Hannah mouths words Annie can't hear, then touches a sticky hand to Annie's cheek, gently angling her head, pointing.

Nearly three pages of sins... so many different ways not to tell the truth.

There is Esther, two doors down, in Rita Rubin's yard. Annie didn't know all the neighbors by name before that day. Rita Rubin has thinning hair, never the same after chemo, and a Chihuahua named Max.

Esther squats in Rita Rubin's grass, a small brown boulder in white panties and undershirt. Intent on what she's doing, she doesn't see Annie and Hannah until they are upon her. She's picking Rita Rubin's fresh-planted pansies, plucking at the roots, counting...*four, five, a hundred...*"For you, Mommy," she smiles, holding up a bouquet of velvety purple, yellow of the sun.

Bryan called twice that morning. Once to leave his *I'm OK* message. A second time, which Annie grabbed on the first ring, to say he'd gotten out, down all those stairs, but was going back up. "Don't worry," he said. "They said we're safe here." It seemed true at the time.

Annie made her first list quilt two weeks later, on Yom Kippur, a list of sins her fellow congregants in temple recited aloud while symbolically beating their chests, asking God's forgiveness:

For the sins we have committed against You with the utterance of our lips
For the sins we have committed against You by foolish speech
By deception and falsehood
By insincerity
By talebearing...

Nearly three pages of sins, and more than a dozen involving words of the mouth. So many different ways to not tell the truth. Annie had sat in the pew next to her mother, Esther and Hannah squirming on her lap, unable to say the words. Then she went home and took out her fabric markers, began making a list.

10:29 a.m. Annie carries Esther and Hannah home. "Hold on," she says. They are heavy but balanced, arms wrapped around her neck. The sun glistens off the flat planes of their cheeks, the shiny black caps of their hair. Her mother says Asian people are related to the Jews, the lost tribe. But then she also says Native Americans are the lost tribe. And she calls them Chinese and Indians because she's just quoting her own grandmother, paying homage, not really believing. There's truth, and then there's story.

"Look, Mommy," Esther says, letting go with one hand to point, as Tom the gardener rides his tractor up a ramp into the back of his truck. "Fuck...one fuck," she counts happily.

At just that moment Peggy the mail lady pulls up to deliver bills and catalogs into Annie's box by the street; she left a sinful chocolate cake in there one day back when everyone else was bringing casseroles.

Esther lets go with the other hand. Now she points with both hands, V for victory—one towards Tom the gardener's rig and the other, still clutching those pansies, at the postal truck. "Two fucks!" she cries, jiggling up-and-down. She knows Annie won't drop her. ●

Elizabeth Edelglass is the Library Director at the Department of Jewish Education of Greater New Haven. "Variables" is part of a story cycle she is writing about various members of a Jewish American family spanning the past century.

Fascinated by stories we've been hearing about passionate relationships developed in midlife—among women known to the media as the "menopause boom" of 45-to-64-year-olds—Lilith asked writer and filmmaker Susan Barocas to mull over romance with a small group of high-powered, heterosexual Washington women. They all knew her, and none of them knew each other—at least not before their frank conversation began.

We eavesdropped, with their permission.

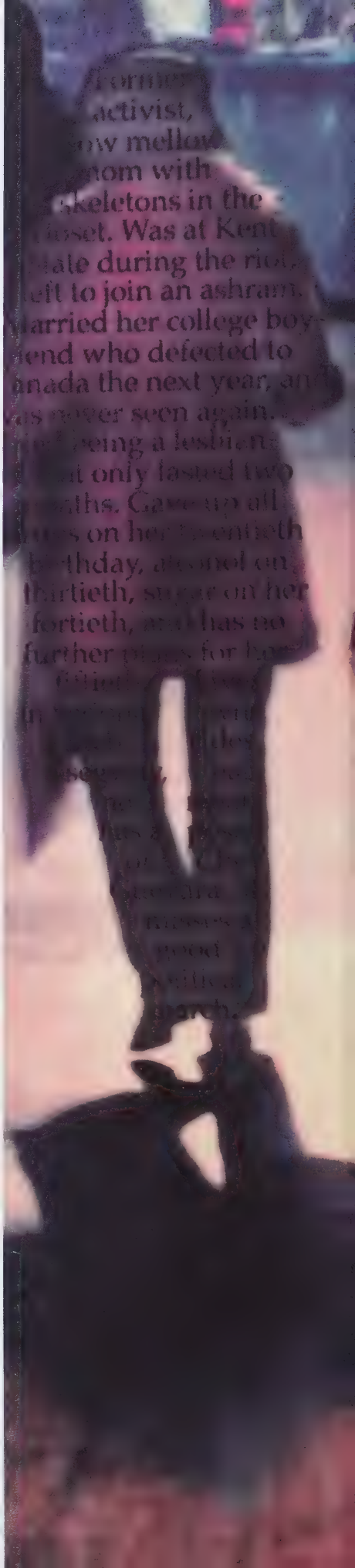
Single and Looking for (Late) Romance (Maybe)

by Susan H. Barocas

When my marriage ended, I was middle-aged and worried—had romance left my life forever? Over the past few years since then, the questions grew: What about intimacy, sex, passion? Are middle-aged women entitled to romance, or is it only for the young? How satisfying would a relationship be at this stage in my life? Which am I more afraid of—not finding romance, or finding it?

At 53, I needed help, so like Carrie in "Sex in the City" (but without her youthful beauty or wardrobe), I turned to the best resource I could think of: my girlfriends. I invited five brave and honest single, middle-aged Jewish women to have a conversation about what, for lack of a better term, I called "late romance." Joining me were **Carolyn Projansky**, 51, a filmmaker currently producing a documentary about white South Africans' resistance to apartheid; **Heidi Goldsmith**, 51, founder and executive director of CORE: the Coalition for Residential Education; **Laura Milstein**, 45, development director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; **Joy Midman**, 54, executive director of the National Association for Children's Behavioral Health; and Rabbi **Tamara Miller**, 58, founder and spiritual leader of Capital Kehillah and director of pastoral care at George Washington University Hospital.

This section is made possible in part by the generous support of Targum Shlishi, a Raquel and Aryeh Rubin Philanthropy.



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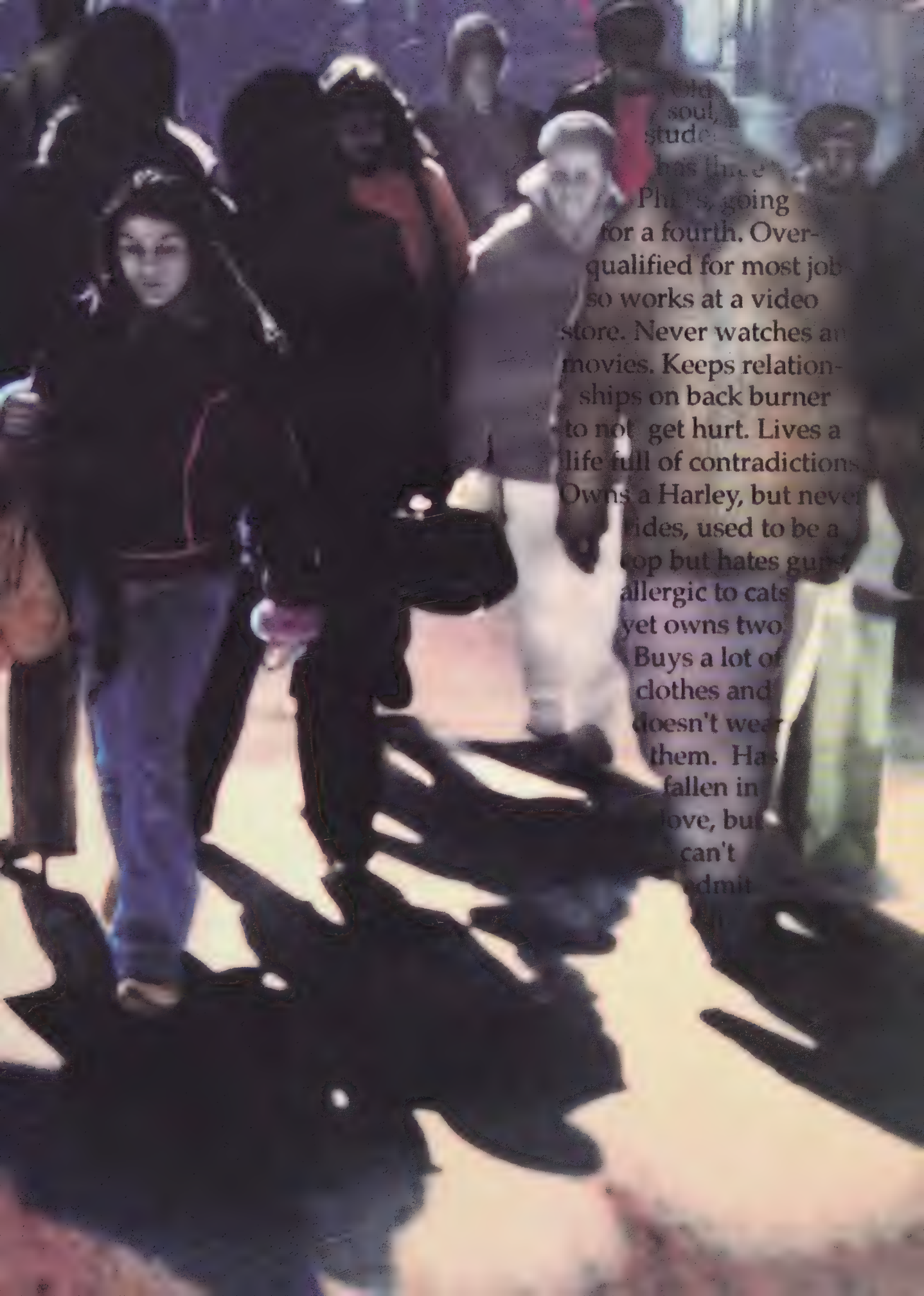
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Carolyn: I separated from my husband a year ago, and I'm not very happy about being in my fifties and single again. I haven't ventured out into that "single" world yet. Being single at 51 with children is much more doable than in your 20s or 30s without children because I'm not lonely.

Heidi: That's my main identity right now—a mom. And it took me so long to get here. I have a young son adopted from Vietnam. Romance was something I invested time and energy in for years. I was even married for a few years, but that was 20 years ago. Daniel's my romance right now. I'm sure eventually I'll get back into it, but with a scrumptious four-and-a-half-year old versus having to go through all the dating, the meeting, and exchanging histories…I like men, but it's actually been a welcome break.

"Sex is easier to find than romance."

Laura: It's almost like I don't remember I was married, because I've been single for the past nine years. My lifestyle is very much a single lifestyle, since we didn't have children and now I'm past the biological point where I can have any. That is probably my biggest regret in terms of love. For nine years, I was a part-time ski instructor. I'm also a brown belt in Tai Kwan Do. I kind of feel like I have to say that, like you guys talk about your kids, because to me, my activities and my interests are really what I have, what defines me. It's a luxury and a curse, because I feel like I'm always looking for interesting things to do, and it's a lot of self-investment.

Joy: I've been widowed for seven years last week. I remember feeling so old as the mother of an eight-year-old son when I was 47, and then so young as a widow and the mother of that same child at 48. One of my issues now that my son is getting ready to go to college is the panic of not knowing—or thinking I don't know—how to live and be alone again.

Tamara: I've been single for 18 years now, as long as I was married. I have four grown children, and I became a rabbi late

"I've been single for 18 years now, as long as I was married."

in life, a wonderful challenge. At least 80 percent of the people in my synagogue community are single, but on a continuum. The span of life is so long now that you can be single, married, divorced and single again, second marriage, widowed. So, we can have romance many times over. I've made one *shidduch* in my congregation. The lady was 38 and the guy was 31. That wasn't bad. [*Approving noises and laughter.*]

Carolyn: Now that would be a shul I'd like!

Susan: The truth is I was interested in this topic because I'm afraid of it. One of the toughest parts of separating for me—I was 47 with a three-year-old son—was facing the possibility that I might never marry or find romantic love again.

Laura: You called it "late romance." I want to challenge the word "late" because I feel it's almost pejorative. What does it mean? As opposed to "early"? As opposed to "on time"? Is it because there's an expectation that romance has to do with having a family?

Susan: Does romance have a shelf life? [*Laughter.*]

ALL: Yes!

Laura: I want to know this for myself as a reality check. Is body image an issue all the time?

Joy: A hundred percent.

Susan: When I feel overweight, I don't project myself feeling confident, sexy, attractive. I think for a lot of women, weight is a huge issue. It becomes worse as we get older because of what happens to our bodies with menopause.

Joy: That's why it's called "men-o-pause." [*Loud laughter.*]

TIME IS ON OUR SIDE (DETAIL) BY SHERRY KARVER, 60" X 48", OIL & PHOTO IMAGES, 2002

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Carolyn: That's cute, but you know what? They don't look so hot either!

Joy: Trust and being devoted to being with someone supercedes sex, body image, media images. I mean, you can have sex without romance. God knows plenty of people do it every day, and maybe some of us have. But this image of romance…you know, we grow up with the swept-off-our-feet fantasies. I had those fantasies, the knight in shining armor. It was in the '60s and '70s tie-dye image, but it was still this concept of someone coming in to save me somehow, to make my life full, to give me everything I needed. At this point in my life, things are very different.

Carolyn: Since separating, I find myself falling back—after 15 years—into the hope of being swept off my feet by a man. Maybe it was ingrained in me during so many years of being single. I was deeply in love in my late teens and early twenties, and did *not* end up marrying him. That experience was so intense and so wonderful. One of the good things about being separated is that I can again have that dream and the hope that I can find that feeling again. I am dying to have that feeling again because it was so transcendently wonderful. It's a high! On the other hand, I'd settle for sex at this point. [*Raucous laughter.*]

Laura: I bet there are a lot of men out there who'd like to take you up on that!

Tamara: The truth is, sex is easier to find than romance.

Carolyn: Not always! [*Laughter.*]

Susan: Sex can really confuse us. What's really romantic to me and what I need in a relationship now is to be cherished.

Have Computer. Will Romance Follow?

When I found out that the 67-year-old mother of one of my friends had met her "significant other" on the Internet, I googled "Jewish Internet dating"—2,090,000 results! The top 10 sites split between the actual dating sites and sites that wanted to give me advice on how to do it. One site offered men advice on how to create a "masculine and confident dating profile" while for women, a "sexy dating profile."

Feeling a bit cynical, I phoned this woman for verification. I'll call her Alice. Yes, she was delighted to tell me, it's true, and I had caught her just a few hours before she was leaving on a two-week vacation with "Mr. JDate." We'll call him Richard.

Alice took up Internet dating in 2004, two years after the death of her second husband. "JDate was the only site I used," she says. "At the beginning, you spend a couple of months on how to pick up and answer ads and how to write a succinct response. You have to give enough pertinent information without putting yourself on the line." Alice used a pseudonym and gave out only her cell phone number, so she knew anybody who called asking for her other self was from the Internet.

After she and Richard met online and exchanged a few emails and phone calls, they decided to meet in person at a restaurant halfway between their two Massachusetts homes. Alice felt this was totally safe, and was impressed when he came out of the restaurant to meet her and "walk me in like a gentleman." She describes it as a completely natural relationship from the beginning. "Here was somebody who fit. It was as if we had known each other for a very long time."

Before Richard, Alice enjoyed meeting "some interesting people" from Internet connections, but also had her share of strange encounters. "Some guys start out sounding very nice and interesting, then out of nowhere you get weird questions or comments." Like the one who couldn't wait to get together with her and tell her all of his great first date stories. She told him she wasn't interested in being one of those stories. Overall, Alice found "a lot of people were much more polite than you ever would have expected."

"The process is an emotional roller-coaster."

According to the online Dating Services Information Guide, there are a lot of Alices and Richards out there; JDate.com boasts about 500,000 registered Jewish singles, with 15,000 joining every month and hundreds of couples who have met and married through the service. (More details on them are available at the site's Happy Endings section.)

But those numbers didn't add up for Marsha (a pseudonym), 49, from Connecticut, who first tried JDate when she separated from her husband in 2001. "I didn't have a clue what it was about," she says. "I did it because my sister was successful at meeting people, and I live in an area without a significant single population." When her sister was 40, she met her husband through the Internet.

Marsha's experience was quite different. "It was very heady the first few times that someone was interested and we got together, almost a kind of adolescent feeling of sexual energy and potential romance," she says. "Now I find it disruptive and too time-consuming. It takes a tremendous amount of time searching, reading and writing responses. The process is also a bit of an emotional rollercoaster. I get too little return for the amount of time I have to invest. Right now, I can't do that and parent my children, work and take care of my house and the rest of my life." What she finds positive, however, is the knowledge that when she's ready, there are other single people out there who are her age and looking for partners.

Danielle Werchowsky, 45, of Arlington, Virginia, hasn't found a lasting romantic partner, but over the past 10 years that she has used Internet dating, she has had good dates and even made a few lasting friendships. One change she has noticed over the years of using Internet dating is that "in the mid-40s, there's not as much property on the market as when you're younger."

Now the single mother of a two-year-old, Danielle advises that "it's important to get on the phone relatively early to get a better sense of the person, but then don't drag it out with a lot of calls. There's something about face-to-face chemistry that can't be duplicated on the telephone or Internet.

—*S.H.B.*

In addition to JDate.com, two other popular sites are JewishCafe.com and JewishMatchmaker.com. Many other Internet dating sites have separate sections for Jewish singles.

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Heidi: On the other hand, I remember in my early 40s being faced with a choice—I either stay with a man who was very romantic and had everything on my list, or I go after my dream of having a child, and maybe later I'll find someone to spend my life with, maybe not. The man cherished me, he was romantic…all that right stuff, but it meant having to deny another part of me, which was to be a mother, and I had to have that. Now I don't need the movie-idealized, traditional one-on-one male love relationship to feel that wonderful feeling.

Tamara: I find that second marriages are more into the relationship, whereas first marriages are into the family. My vision of romance now is of a partnership where our purpose *is* the partnership. But if we say it's only one man that's going to give us romance, that's a lot to ask of one person.

Carolyn: I feel like my marriage was for my children, and my next relationship will be for me.…I think it's biological. I really do. When my children were babies, the physical fulfillment that I needed came from holding these little creatures, the breastfeeding, the smells, the experience—that was so fulfilling.

Heidi: That's intimacy, but I don't think that's romance.

Joy: I say intimacy and romance go together. I had lost my father five days after my son was born. We still didn't miss a dinner with candlelight, whether it was at 10 o'clock, 11 or one in the morning. We were glued at the hip, which is why I'm still satisfied with my relationship. I mean, I still wear my wedding band. I don't know if that has to do with the fact that I still have a child at home, or with me having not met someone I'm interested in, but it's a wonderful buffer.

Tamara: For me, now, I want to explore the friendship before the sexual relationship. A solid relationship does have a good sex component, but first comes the deeper relationship. The more you have that, the more intimacy you can have in and outside of the bedroom.

Susan: So, intimacy is romantic.

Tamara: In-to-me-see. In-to-me-see. You're allowing the other person to see into you. How many of us really allow people to see us

> "People aren't afraid of being isolated and cold and alone. They're really afraid of the heat, of really connecting body to body, soul to soul."

vulnerable and naked, in the spiritual and physical sense, and be comfortable with that? One of my rebbes used to say, people aren't afraid of being isolated and cold and alone. They're really afraid of the heat, of really connecting body to body, soul to soul.

Susan: The heat of a relationship, the cool control professionally. Because of the women's movement, I believed I could do everything, have everything. Now I know it's not so easy.

Heidi: That is definitely the product of feminism. I can't have romance without it. I don't want to be on a pedestal, and I don't want to be with a powerful man to make me powerful.

Joy: For me, the partnership is the high. It's also the spiritual element of sharing values and an ethos that can be very romantic in that sense of having a higher order. The whole point is it should be personal! My husband and I both worked at home, we both lived at home, we were partners. And one of the things I can remember—he was not born Jewish and he did not want a ketuba, a Jewish wedding contract. To me, it was always so critical. But I made the mistake of giving him the books to research it, and he said, "I'm not marrying you by signing anything with the conditions of getting out of it."

Carolyn: I was actually a feminist studies major in college, and I was a very radical feminist. I think that, in some ways, putting my politics first was a barrier that I put up for many years, between me and the possibility of having a relationship. I was looking for this perfect man who was as feminist as I was, and I never found that person. Now that I'm 20 or 30 years older, I feel like I'm more tolerant, more accepting of the fact that people come with baggage at whatever age. Over the years I've become much more comfortable with my own feminism as a kind of fundamental foundation for my own self. I don't need to prove it anymore.

Laura: Sometimes in a relationship, I've found the most difficult thing is to maintain my own needs. I don't know how you guys raise children, because I feel like *I'm* just a full-time job! [*Laughter.*] When I get involved in a relationship, I want to be able to go with a certain amount of compromise. Sometimes I find that I lose myself, my focus. [*Many murmurs of agreement.*] It makes the relationship all messed up. It's a vicious cycle. When I stop a relationship, I get all this energy back. I feel like I get shot out of a cannon. I feel the best ever when I'm not in a relationship. [*More agreement.*]

Joy: So often you can become who you are better when you're not appended. I think it has to do with being a woman. You do sublimate.

Carolyn: When you're in a couple, I think that becomes the defining focus of your life, and it's hard to let friends in. Since I separated, I've been able to focus on my women friends. They have always been the most *reliable* part of my life. Because my husband was somewhat resentful, I had to literally sneak around, calling my friends at night after he went to bed, because he was jealous of my time being spent calling my friends, rather than spending the time with him in the evening. I will never put myself in that kind of a situation again.

Tamara: Well, if men would have more relationships, friendships, with men…

Carolyn: Maybe men need to have their "feminist movement" as well! It is happening, little by little. My ex-husband has joined a supportive men's group. If he had had that men's group when we were married, it might have made a difference to the marriage. It'll make him a better husband to somebody else! [*Laughter.*]

Laura: I think if there are men who are very much in touch with themselves and can be authentic in the relationship,

TIME IS ON OUR SIDE (DETAIL) BY SHERRY KARVER, 60" X 48", OIL & PHOTO IMAGERY, 2002

that's where the equality comes from, where you can have a partnership. Of course, I haven't quite found one yet....

Susan: When you're saying that, I'm thinking—Okay, ladies, where's a group of men on this planet sitting around having this conversation? [*Laughter.*]

Joy: Do you think there's romance in the *frum* world?

Susan: In the *frum* world it's very different. When you're 18—you meet a guy three times and, if he's acceptable, you get engaged. Then, over time, you learn to love.

Laura: I want to bring God into this discussion. I feel like, for me at this point, unless I feel in line with God and higher purpose in every moment of the relationship, it's not right. And two people—what is most important? Is the relationship most important, or the relationship with God most important?

"I feel the best ever when I'm not in a relationship."

Heidi: For me, too, if a person doesn't have that level, that spiritual "thing" to them, I don't know if we could really connect.

Carolyn: I don't function on a spiritual level, I have to say. My spiritual-ness is my politics and my work. I need somebody who's intellectual. One of the things that attracted me to my husband was the fact that he was always interesting. We

The Fairy Godmother of Introductions

by Sandee Brawarsky

I was once a relationships expert. That was the tagline that producers attached to my name, for about eight months more than 10 years ago, when I did a circuit of radio and television appearances, including Oprah.

My so-called expertise came from the fact that I'd written a short, cheerful book on dating called *How to Meet Men As Smart as You*, published by Simon & Schuster. I wrote the book at the suggestion of a friend who's now my literary agent; I had by then introduced six couples who'd gotten married, and we agreed that I might have something useful to say on the subject. Aside from the obvious traits like intelligence, sense of humor and sophistication, "smart" really signified someone interesting—a man with whom to have a never-ending conversation.

My underlying message then to women—of all ages—was to stay hopeful and open to possibilities; to be creative in going out to a lot of places where you might meet a like-minded guy and—here's where my matchmaking came in—to ask all sorts of people in your life whether they knew of interesting single men. The key was in the asking: reaching beyond your usual circle of acquaintances and posing the question with confidence, thinking of it as enabling the person to do a favor for both parties. One idea I really like, shared with me by a friend, is to ask real estate agents—they're often the first to know of single men moving to a new city or just across town to a new (single) home. In my book, I spoke about dating as though it were like looking for a job, but much more fun.

What has changed in the decade since the book was published? Ten years later, several of my long-time single friends are now married; some friends who seemed married for life are single again, once again thinking about dating. I offer the same advice of a decade ago, the same gentle shoves to be out in the world shaping a good life and enjoying it. And I suggest ignoring the advice of those who urge coyness, manipulation and an invented unavailability.

My short, cheerful book on dating was called *How to Meet a Man As Smart As You*

Since the book was published, I've introduced two more couples who have gotten married, bringing my total to eight. And I have a few others in the works. I'm often asked how it is that I have such a knack for making matches. I have to admit that I don't have any special talent—I just do it, and I do it often, recognizing that I'm wrong more often than I'm right. I keep trying, and I urge others, both single and married people, to do the same.

Even in this Internet age, I continue to think that meeting people through others might be the best way to find someone great. This is true even when, as is most often the case, the friendly matchmaker seems to have gotten it all wrong.

In the book I mentioned using the Internet as a tool, but JDate and Match.com were unknown. Now, I know many couples who've met through these Internet services, even couples whose paths had literally crossed often in their everyday lives but who didn't ever notice one another until they saw each other's online profiles. If you're comfortable writing and appreciate a certain anonymity, the Internet can be a great way to meet people, because it brings you new communities to draw from, plus it's a useful way to reconnect with old friends...and former boyfriends, who may turn out to be new possibilities.

But dating online has its own challenges. A friend who's a psychoanalyst tells me that people make the same mistakes in internet dating that they do in life (like making snap judgments and dismissing people too quickly).

I am sympathetic to the many people who say that, as much as they try, finding someone to date can be tough work, and discouraging. When I was called the fairy godmother of dating, I said that I wished I could wave a magic wand and help people to connect. There's no magic wand, but there is good news all the time. The last three of my friends who found significant others, after many years of effort, met them, respectively, on a city bus, through an introduction and, years earlier, when the two worked on a project together (and he was married). As heartening as these connections are, I'm also moved by the stories of other women, who lead full and fulfilling lives, sometimes with romance, and remain decidedly single.

Sandee Brawarsky is a journalist and book critic whose most recent book is *212 Views of Central Park: Experiencing New York City's Jewel From Every Angle.*

always had something to talk about. [*Laughs.*] Maybe I don't have a broad enough definition of spirituality.

Tamara: I never thought about romance being close to spirituality, but when you're in love, you're connected to everyone and loving of everything and everyone. So, in a way, my growth has been that I can be in love with life. I've learned a lot from my relationship with God that I want to apply to my relationships with men and women. I'm trying to change my image of what love is. It's not about falling in love or getting that high. It's about really having a devotional relationship to each other, healing each other's wounds.

"If a person doesn't have that spiritual 'thing,' I don't know if we could really connect."

You know, my most memorable, loving, passionate and deep spiritual relationship was with an Orthodox young man who was steeped in study, in text. There was something very romantic about the intellectual and the spiritual that comes together when you're studying text together. On the other hand—he was younger and there was something missing.... besides commitment. [*Laughter.*] I realized he was never going to come up to my consciousness, it wasn't part of him. It's a different kind of equality.

Laura: Unfortunately, I've found that the men who have the deeper spiritual side tend not to have the more material.

Susan: So, in other words, we're not attracted to those guys.

Laura: Correct.

Susan: We find the guys that are a little tougher, not so deep thinking, not so spiritual, more appealing to us. It's very hard to find the combination that's sexy. But, Laura, you said before that intimacy and romance do feel extremely spiritual to you.

Laura: Yes, and probably the most frightening thing to me also, which is why I haven't been married for nine years. Whatever happens in one's life, to be able to make that journey with another person...it's like continuing your self-growth with another soul.

Susan: Speaking from my own experience, the day that my husband moved out, I felt I got myself back.

Carolyn: Me, too. But I've got all of these fears about financial security. Frankly, I don't think I would marry again unless I was marrying somebody who had significant financial security. I'm the artist who's not making any money. Why put up with all this stuff, if you don't have any security?

Tamara: I have to say a rabbinical thought here, which is that there is no such thing as security. There's only faith. Security is within ourselves. That's also what feminism taught me. Men come and go, money comes and goes. Health comes and goes.

A Tale of True Love Found

New Yorker Amy Stone seemed surprised to find her *bashert*—her intended one—when she was in her 50s. "I wasn't looking very hard for a husband. I'd always figured I would get married—and then, after a certain point, I thought maybe it wasn't going to happen. That's when it did."

Stone was 57 in 2000 when she met Ed Krowitz, then 66, through a friend from college. Their first date lasted five days, although Ed "went home to cousin Stanley's every night." They were engaged one year later and married in 2002, one month before her 60th birthday, on the front lawn of her childhood home in New Rochelle, New York.

"I spent my entire life in mostly short-term-but-sexy romantic relationships with inappropriate people," Stone reflects. "As I got older, I calmed down a teeny bit." She also found herself working such long days at a Jewish nonprofit organization that her major relationship was with her cleaning lady.

Then, in her early fifties and still up for romance, Stone, who had spent her post-college years in Thailand in the Peace Corps and then as a journalist, made a list of what she was looking for in a man: a U.S. foreign service officer, silver hair, wire-frame glasses, not Jewish. "Then I met Ed, and he had three out of four. He was Jewish. Now I'm very glad he is."

Krowitz is also, according to Stone, "totally romantic." On the day she was fired, she came home to Champagne chilling, a bubble bath with rose petals, and a celebration—because now they'd have more time to be together.

As much as she delights in the candlelight, rose petals and Champagne, which have continued, Stone knows she has also found a deeper romance. "Even in our worst moments, we groan, but we know we are each other's life partner in this great adventure." They're spending this year in China.

—*S.H.B.*

Carolyn: But my grandmother said, "Rich or poor, it's better to have money." Of course, if I fell in love, this whole idea would go out the window!

Susan: When *was* the last time one of you was attracted to someone?

Heidi: Well, attracted is one thing. Moving it to bed is another! But it's so reassuring to know, oh, I work. The heart works again, I work again. Oh, thank goodness. I thought I was just frozen, maybe forever. But it works just like it used to!

Carolyn: I had the same feeling when I found a couple of men I was attracted to, but they weren't available. Part of it is an issue of supply and demand. There was never a big enough supply to choose from.

Laura: I think we artificially overemphasize couple-ness. How many times have you gone somewhere as a couple and felt uncomfortable even though you were with someone?

Tamara: I'll tell you when I feel the most single. I officiate at a lot of weddings, and I'm happy to do it. It's wonderful.

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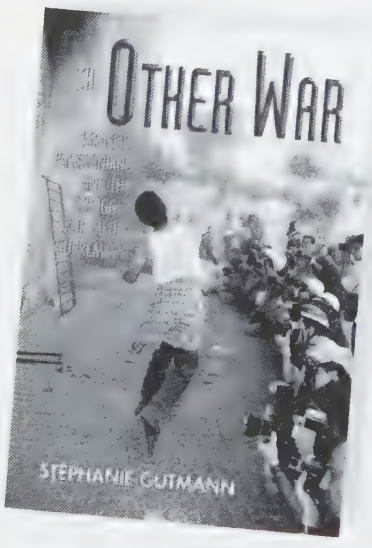

MIDEAST MEDIA CONFLICT

"An account so richly and meticulously documented that it will shock even readers already aware of the egregious bias against Israel in the mainstream media."

—Norman Podhoretz

In *The Other War,* Stephanie Gutmann documents how political and military realities in the Mideast are defined by a constantly shifting cast of international journalists on the prowl for "good pictures" or career-making scoops, and often guided by a hardened anti-Israel ideology. Present at a time of suicide bombings and armed response, Gutmann describes how the region and its people—Israeli and Palestinian alike—became cardboard cutouts in dramas predetermined by ratings-obsessed and sometimes biased editors continents away.

Gutmann introduces us to key players in the daily battles for headline supremacy: the mercenary freelance photographers who hawk their bloodiest pictures to the highest bidder; the politically correct TV "parachuters" who drop in on the unfolding Mideast tragedy to get "face time" before flying off to the next international hotspot; the Palestinian Authority spin-meisters; the beleaguered Israeli press officers trying to present their side of a complex story.

Traveling into the disputed territories herself, Gutmann reconstructs the battle for Jenin, the death of the teenage martyr Mohammed al-Dura, and other events that became key battles in the other war. We learn many things from her absorbing insider's account, chief among them that there is a reality in this region never touched by the international media corps, and that as in other wars, truth in this one is the first casualty.

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Afterwards, I say to myself, "OK, which table are they going to put me at?" [*Laughter.*] Sometimes I even ask, "Maybe there's a single man you could put me next to?" But it's usually Aunt May who can hardly hear. I have the professional cover of being a rabbi, but still, when everyone's dancing and people don't ask you to dance because you're the rabbi....Sometimes I wonder if people even know I'm single.

Susan: What makes weddings romantic?

Carolyn: It's an ideal. Everything's going to be wonderful. I'm concerned that I will not be able to have that hope again. That I'm too skeptical and cynical.

Tamara: Oh, yes! I hope so.

Joy: Is it more difficult for you to meet people?

Tamara: It may be more difficult because I'm a rabbi, but I don't use that as an excuse. Some of my best friends are rabbis, and they're married. So we could all have excuses.

Heidi: Excuses? I have mine! Oh, I'm too busy with my kid. I don't have the energy, which is partly an excuse and partly real. Once you've accepted that Plan A—the child and the husband—is not going to be yours, or was yours in the past but not forever, you have to re-think everything. I said I haven't thought about it. Because I'm in Plan B. This is not the plan I had for 20 years. I had to make a new one, and it isn't finished yet. Is romance part of my Plan B? I'm guessing it will be, but where does it fit?

Susan: So, how to find someone to love, to fit into our lives and plans? How to find romance? The Internet? Professional matchmakers? Singles functions? Synagogue? In-to-me-see. Are you going to find that on JDate?

Laura: Surprisingly, every man I've dated in the last eight years I met online.

Carolyn: I went on JDate when I separated, and I found two men I'd dated before I got married. It was traumatic, because I don't want to get involved with somebody else's cast-offs.

Tamara: I don't know what it is about Jewish men. Maybe they're just too much in their heads. I think that Jewish men and Jewish women are looking for that connection, but sometimes they can't find it in their own Jewish community.

Laura: If you are honest with yourself and allowing yourself to be vulnerable to the world, *that's* what you get in the romance and the relationship. I think that tonight was as rich and fulfilling as you could get. Too bad we don't have dates like this! [*Laughter and much agreement.*]

Susan H. Barocas, currently working on a Masters in multi-tasking, is a writer, filmmaker, teacher and single parent. She is working on a book about family food and a film about a Jewish landmark in D.C.

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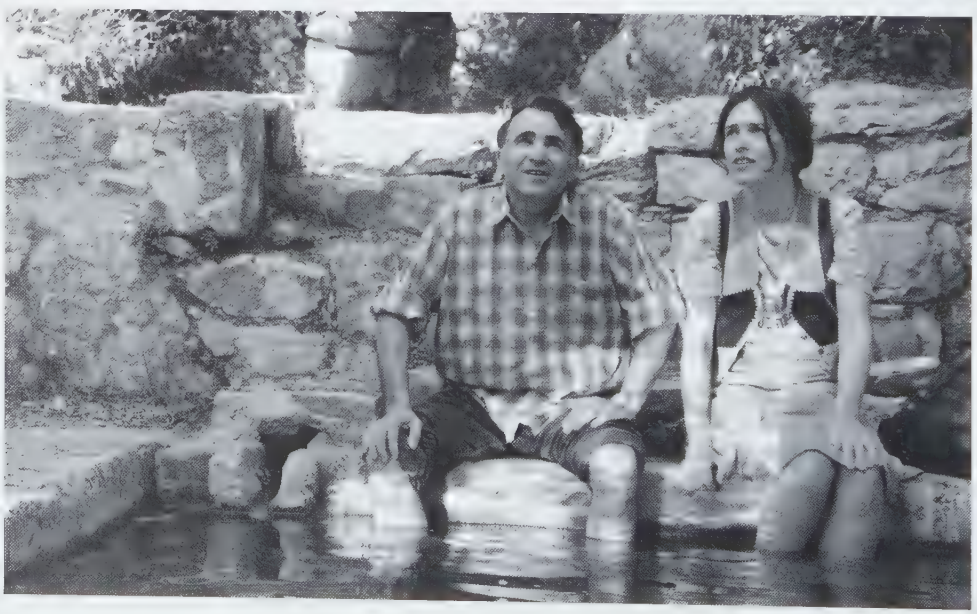
Family Trumps Ideology

A strong mother and her two daughters **light up a frank new Israeli film.**

Set in Jerusalem in 1981, **Joseph Cedar**'s "Campfire" focuses on a young widow trying secure a place for herself and her two adolescent daughters in one of Israel's nascent West Bank settlements. Those expecting an overtly political or ideological film, however, are in for something very different. More than anything, "Campfire" is a personal and affecting exploration of the inevitable tension between the need for security and belonging, and our desire to forge our own path.

When the film begins, Rachel Gerlick's husband has been dead for a year—the family has just completed the requisite mourning period—and, at least initially, his absence seems to have more practical than emotional implications for the family. As a single mother, Rachel is apparently not an ideal candidate for settlement life. Indeed, Cedar's pioneers seem nothing like their ideologically driven, contemporary counterparts. While the men wear yarmulkes and the women long skirts, these settlers appear to be motivated primarily by the prospect of acquiring undervalued real estate on which to develop a middle-class suburb. To

Israelis visit the site of their new settlement,on a hill outside Ramallah, in the Israeli film "Campfire."



The widowed Rachel (Michaela Eshet) on an awkward foray into dating.

demonstrate her desire to fit in, Rachel allows the wife of the settlement organizer to set her up on dates with a shy and virginal middle-aged bus driver and a worldly, pompous cantor.

While Rachel embarks on awkward forays into the world of dating, her two daughters are in the midst of their own sexual awakenings. Esti, openly contemptuous of her mother's eagerness to conform, takes every opportunity to sneak off with her soldier boyfriend. Her younger sister, Tami, spends evenings dancing alone to rock music in the living room, pausing only to practice kissing herself in the mirror. When Tami is molested by a group of boys celebrating Lag B'Omer around a campfire, the innocence of her solitary explorations is shattered.

The molestation proves to be a transformative event for Rachel and her family, though not a destructive one. Cedar does not make Tami into a victim. Instead, the episode and its aftermath—during which the settlement organizer urges Rachel to let the incident pass—disabuse Rachel of her desire to be part of the settlement group, propelling her instead to grab the reins of her family again.

With the exception of the bus driver, with whom Rachel ultimately begins a tentative relationship, most men in this film are buffoons or brutes, and all we learn about Rachel's late husband is that she was never really in love with him. In the end, however, this superbly acted film is not about male arrogance or foolishness so much as female strength, and the ways in which even the sometimes strained bonds of family can trump ideology.

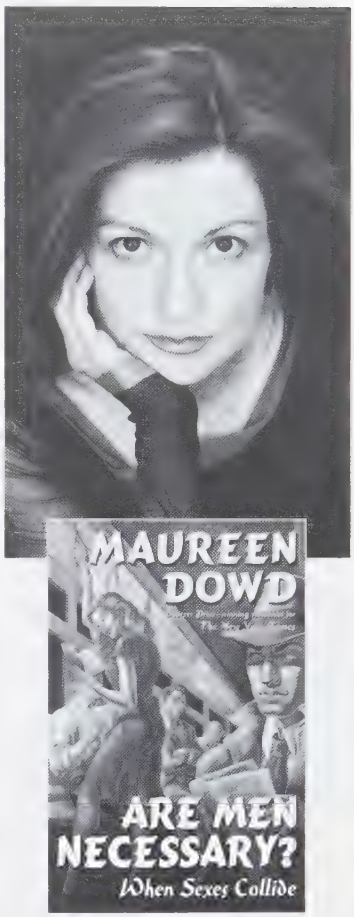
—Hella Winston

Maureen Never Murmurs

Are Men Necessary?, **Maureen Dowd**'s disjointed exploration of women in post-feminist America, fails to deliver on the promise of its titillating art and provocative title. The real question underlying this book (Putnam, 2005, $25.95) is whether women—who, she believes, have been failed by feminism—can extricate themselves from their current muddle on their own, since men, unhelpfully, are not evolving alongside them. Her points: Women now realize that they cannot have it all. Narcissism and materialism have undermined feminism. Moreover, women themselves are subverting the movement's original goals: The most stellar students at Yale dress like sluts, and Hillary Clinton, the woman who might have the greatest chance of becoming President, elected to stand by her philandering husband. As far as Dowd is concerned, the prospects for women are overwhelmingly bleak.

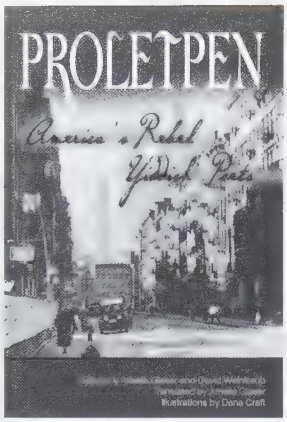
Readers of Dowd's op-ed columns in the New York Times will find nothing new in this book. Her better-grounded sections merely reassemble other writers' gender-related "Most Emailed" articles from the past year. Again and again, Dowd draws on favorite themes from her past editorials, including several fully intact op-eds about the Monica Lewinsky scandal from 1999, her Pulitzer Prize-winning year. Fluff, however, predominates, as she more commonly relies upon reader mail, pop culture, public scandals, t-shirt slogans, her friends, boyfriends, fellow reporters, and her own, often catty, stories to illustrate her point about the failure of feminism's promise. After she cycles back to Condi or Hillary or Martha for the umpteenth time, one feels that even she doesn't know where she is going with all of this.

Though Dowd, who often mentions her Irish Catholic family, devotes little space to religion, the implications of her argument for Jewish women are all too clear. Early on she cites research demonstrating that men would rather marry women in jobs subordinate to their own. Given the statistics that Jews, on average, are more highly educated and have more prestigious jobs than non-Jews, one would expect men's preference for less accomplished women to penalize Jewish women more profoundly. And indeed, the numbers bear this out. The 1991 National Jewish Population Survey showed that Jewish women were exactly twice as likely as non-Jewish women to remain single throughout their childbearing years—15% to 7.5%. If the feminist movement is, as Dowd claims, a "cruel hoax" that lured women into thinking they could have it all, then Jewish women—the best-educated women in America—are the most cruelly tricked of all.



FRED CONRAD

What does her **convoluted argument** imply for ***Jewish*** women?



While Dowd might posit that Jewish feminists have been deceived by feminism's promise, Rabbi Jack Wertheimer claims that the women themselves are to blame. In the October 2005 issue of Commentary magazine, Wertheimer, provost and professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, insensitively blames the childlessness of Jewish women on their focus on higher education and career advancement during their fertile years. What Dowd readily acknowledges but Wertheimer does not, is that young, professional women overwhelmingly do not want to choose career over family. Those Jewish men who are reluctant to accept their female counterparts as equals—or superiors—are forcing Jewish women into that choice.

Judaism is certainly open to taking the long view of things, but given the current, depressing situation of women in general and Jewish women in particular, must we wait one hundred thousand years until the Y-chromosome disappears and men are rendered truly unnecessary before we can have it all? —*Tammy Hepps*

Left-wing women writing their poetry in Yiddish

I had always thought my mother-in-law was called "Little Lefty," because (1) she was short, and (2) she had been a left-handed seamstress in the garment industry. But in the Yiddish-speaking left-wing family I married into, I learned the story was more complicated. Until the day she died, when speaking of the communist newspaper Frayhayt, she whispered its name.

Dovid Katz's excellent introduction to *Proletpen: America's Rebel Yiddish Poets* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2005, $45.00) would have made sense to her, as it explains the differences between *rekhte* (right) and *linke* (left) between World Wars I and II, pointing out, however, that the main newspapers representing each—the Forverts and the Frayhayt—"both were so very proudly socialist and far to the left of the American center." Katz paints a vivid picture of the times when these rivalrous

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factions were much more than matters for textbooks and university courses.

Proletpen, the name of the leftist writers' union, is an appropriate title for this book, divided into thematic sections, such as Urban Landscape, Speaking of Scottsboro, United in Struggle, and Wars to End All Wars. Some of the 39 poets are better known than others, and some names remain lost to us. For example, A. Shtriker is probably a pseudonym ("shtriker" means "knitter"), and in the section Songs of the Shop, in which his (her?) "Figaro" appears, one can hear the rhythm of the factory: "Figaro here, Figaro there./Red knickers up to his knees,/back and forth,/…louder than rushing machines…" Particularly affecting are Betsalel Friedman's words to the mothers of the "Scottsboro boys": "Mothers of boys in death-cells,/mothers shudder at the dead./For you and for us, the enemy soaks/in blood our daily bread."

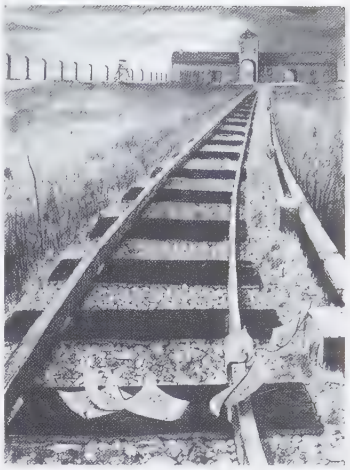
Dana Craft's illustrations include a drawing of the railroad tracks leading to Birkenau with Yiddish manuscript pages scattered between the rails, followed by Zishe Vaynper's "Word, I haven't got room/any more/for you."

The book yields unexpected treasures. Unhappily, however, only seven women are represented: Sarah Barkan, Sarah Fel-Yelin, Sarah Kindman, Malka Lee, Esther Shumyatsher, Dora Teitelboim, Shifre Vays.

Vays, an avid defender of workers' and women's rights, didn't spend time on regrets: "*Ikh vel zikh shiva nit zitsn/nokh mayne yorn, mayne nekhtns*" ("I won't be sitting shiva/for my years, my yesterdays"). Sarah Barkan wrote for adults and children, as did Sarah Fel-Yelin, organizer of self-defense exercises for women and children in World War I and chronicler of her beloved shtetl, Krinik. In "My New York Street Sings," Esther Shumyatsher depicts a vision of how "Want sang and sang on my street today,/a torn cry on its lips, hunger on its knee," finally warning: "You will pay…for your slaves' hunger and sunkenness."

We cannot help asking: where are the rest of the women?

—*Julia Wolf Mazow*



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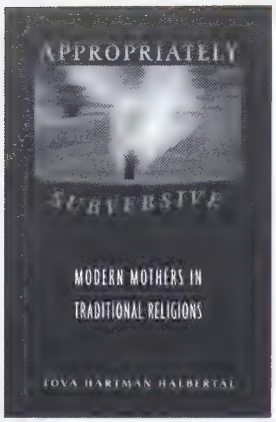
Tammy Hepps is a software developer who lives in New York City.

Julia Wolf Mazow, student of Yiddish language and literature, complied and edited *The Woman Who Lost Her Names: Selected Writings of American Jewish Women.*

Hella Winston's new book is *Unchosen: The Hidden Lives of Hasidic Rebels* (Beacon, 2005).



They choose their orthodoxies, ambivalent about the sexism.

Traditional Jewish and Catholic mothers caught in a bind

Appropriately Subversive: Modern Mothers in Traditional Religions (Harvard University Press, 2003, $35.00) is a wonderful exploration of the lives of several Orthodox Jewish women and traditional Catholic women who share many attributes. They are all feminists, religious educators, and mothers of teenage girls. The Jewish women were in Jerusalem; the Catholic ones in Chicago. **Tova Hartman Halbertal** is careful to avoid finding facile similarities between the two groups, but overwhelmingly, beyond the din of the specific struggles these women fight within their traditions, we hear a common voice. Both groups of women are choosing their orthodoxies, and want to pass on to their daughters a sense of rootedness, of legacy. But in doing so, they have to hide part of themselves, the part that is ambivalent about the sexism in their religions, and its impact on their daughters. At the end of the book, Hartman leaves us with the question: How will the daughters view their mothers, meta-representatives of women in their religion, if they see them only through this veil? And how, indeed, will the daughters interpret their own religions?

Hartman is interested in women as socializers, as teachers of the "mother tongue." She has chosen the women in this study because they socialize in two realms, as mothers and as teachers in religious schools, but they do so as carriers of conflicting world-views. Her questions are: how do women live with these conflicts? How do they communicate about them to their daughters? And how to their students?

Most of the women Hartman interviews, both Catholic and Jewish, choose to send their daughters to rigidly traditional schools. They say they want the schools to be the primary religious socializers of their daughters, to give them a "solid" background, upon which the mothers can layer on questioning

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and doubt. The consequence of this abdication of authority can be unexpected, as when the daughters fail to understand their mothers' struggles and refuse to take on their battles.

The mothers appear concerned about protecting their daughters from the consequences of nonconformity; it is easier to be a "good girl" in society. But what message does this send to the girls about the mothers' feelings about their own lives, the choices they have made, the ambivalence with which they live?

The women who protect their daughters from the hard questions by sending them to traditional schools work out their revolutionary impulses as teachers. They "wanted to inculcate a spirit of intellectual honesty and curiosity and a readiness to question authority" for their students. At least two felt they had a "mission to capture the hearts and minds of their students in order to further a feminist transformation of Jewish tradition." What a contrast to the way in which they protect their daughters!

Hartman concludes that feminists in traditional religions have two selves, the committed self and the resisting self. She finds, to her surprise, little admission of conflict between the mothers and daughters, and suggests that this must be because the mothers put a veil between the generations, and silence both themselves and their daughters. They shield their daughters from the ambivalence they feel toward the position of women in their deeply patriarchal religions. And so they sit at a distance from their girls. But these mothers have a forum in which to express their rebellions: the classroom. Their students, not their daughters, inherit their struggle.

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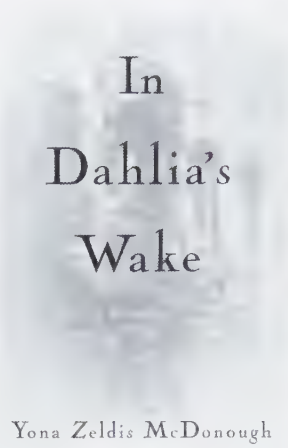
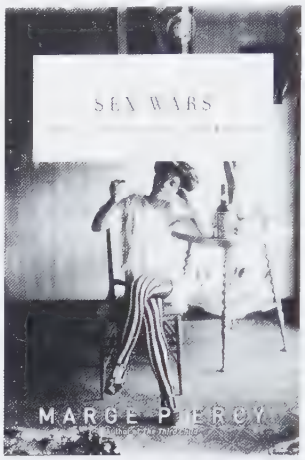
Two New Novels from Lilith Editors

Both Lilith's fiction editor and our poetry editor have new novels out, and we are delighted to call your attention to both.



Yona Zeldis McDonough's *In Dahlia's Wake* (Doubleday, 2005), tells the simultaneously wrenching and romantic story of a Brooklyn Jewish couple (lovers since college) whose closely-woven life tears apart when their young daughter dies suddenly in a freak accident. The romance each falls into and the wisdom of an Alzheimer's-drifting grandmother gradually help them re-weave the fabric of their relationship. Yona Zeldis McDonough, Lilith fiction editor, is the author also of the novel *The Four Temperaments* and editor of the anthologies *The Barbie Chronicles* and *All The Available Light: A Marilyn Monroe Reader*, plus several books for children.



Marge Piercy, Lilith's poetry editor, is the author of 17 novels, as well as books of poetry. Her latest novel, *Sex Wars* (Morrow/HarperCollins, 2005), deals with gender, power, and the American Dream in 19th Century New York City. The characters include some of the most notorious in American history, but the plot also brings to life a Jewish woman who is a social activist on the Lower East Side. Interwoven with Freydeh's story in the post-Civil War period are the lives of real-life heroines like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. *Sex Wars* has been chosen as a selection of the Quality Paperback Book Club.

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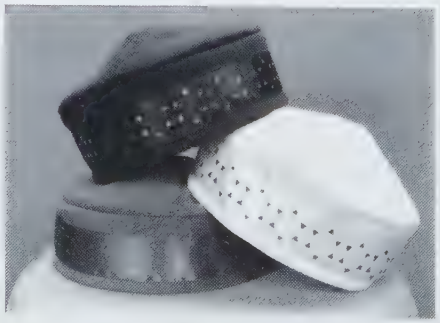

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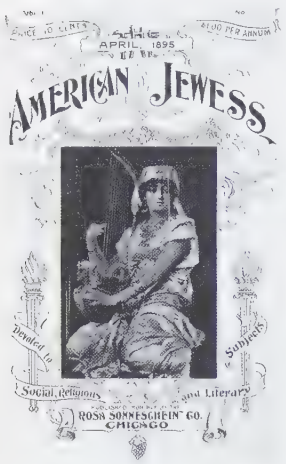
A Precursor to Lilith Magazine? The American Jewess was the first English-language publication directed to American Jewish women. It was published mostly as a monthly from 1895-99. Edited by **Rosa Sonneschein** (1847-1932), it presented demands for synagogue membership for women; household and fashion tips; early expressions of American Zionism; and reflections on the propriety of women riding bicycles. The Jewish Women's Archive has made available a digitized version of this resource and is offering an undergraduate writing prize of $350 for use of "The American Jewess" as source material. *jwa.org*



Different Genders, Different Styles: Exploring the Grief of Fathers and Mothers is the December theme of Out of the Depths: A Monthly Series about the Loss of a Child, through July 2006, organized by the New York Jewish Healing Center and the JCC in Manahattan. There is also a twice-monthly support meeting for Jewish parents who have lost a young child. For information about any of these programs contact Rabbi Simkha Weintraub, at the NYJHC (212)399-2320 x 215.

Down Under. Women in Judaism is the theme of the 18th annual interdisciplinary conference of the Australian Association of Jewish Studies, February 12-13, 2006 at the University of Melbourne. Contact Dr. Dvir Abramovich, 011-613 8344 3789, dvir@unimelb.edu.au.

We Don't Need Another Wave: Dispatches from the Next Generation of Feminists. Writes Melody Allegra Berger, editing this anthology-in-progress: "We, the supposedly 'apathetic' youth of America, are doing our part to enact our feminisms. We don't need another wave. We need a movement." She invites women 30 and under to submit personal narrative essays on topics such as women in the military, sexual assault within the progressive youth community, being raised in alternative families, craftivism ("a feminist perspective on knitting and other seemingly domestic hobbies that are making a comeback") and "power relations in sex, romance, love and lust." Submit your essay to Avalon Publishing Group, Seal Press Acquisitions, 1400 65th St. #250, Emeryville, CA 94608; or put "We Don't Need Another Wave" in the subject line of your e-mail to Berger at HowlingHarpies@gmail.com.

Norma Levitt: one smart, sophisticated "elder." Dedicated to the Jewish community and to the well-being of children, women, elders and the environment, Norma U. Levitt has, since 1974, led non-governmental organizations at the U.N., where she now chairs the committee on multi-generational relationships. She is honorary life president of the Women of Reform Judaism, and was the first female officer of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism). She also has presided over the UNICEF committee, represented the U.S. at world conferences on women and planned the U.N. environmental shabbat. Levitt, a dynamic example of how to live meaningfully in one's later years—of aging with *hiddur* (splendor)—was featured in conversation with Rabbi Dayle A. Friedman, director of Hiddur: The Center for Aging and Judaism of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in October. A videotape is available from Jennifer Coburn (215)576-0800 x152; jcoburn@rrc.edu.

Hineni: Coming Out in a Jewish High School is a documentary about how one lesbian student transformed her community. "I feel like struggling with Torah and with G-d is one thing, and I think I can do that. What I don't want to struggle with is my community," says Shulamit Izenin in the film, which premiered at the Boston Jewish Film Festival and is making the rounds in other cities. Made by Irena Fayngold and Idit Klein for Keshet, an organization working to create a fully inclusive and welcoming Jewish community for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Jews. Watch a trailer at *boston-keshet.org/film.*

Are You a Professional Jew? Advancing Jewish Professionals provides career development and networking opportunities for "young"—defined as 35 and younger or 10 years or less in the field—Jewish communal professionals. Join over 200 participants already on an e-mail list; there are a few events planned for each year on topics such as mentors and lay leader/professional relations. Contact Alisha Goodman, (212)399-2685 x 223, agoodman@jbfcs.org.

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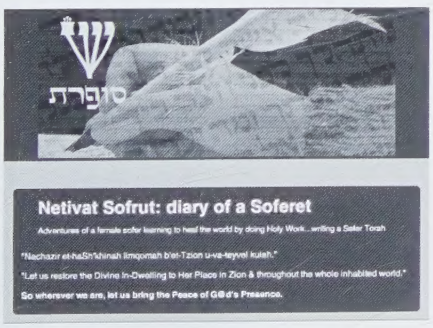
FELIX NADAR (FRENCH, 1820–1910), SARAH BERNHARDT, C. 1860, ALBUMEN PRINT, 8 7/8 X 6 7/8 IN. (22.5 X 17.5 CM). BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, DÉPARTEMENT DES ESTAMPES, PARIS

Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama. Didja know she was *Jewish*? An exhibit devoted to this great nineteenth-century French actress—and first modern celebrity—brings us "the divine Sarah" through paintings, sculpture, photos, costumes, jewelry, furniture and personal effects as well as films and recordings of her voice. Through April 2 at the Jewish Museum of New York. *thejewishmuseum.org*

What does Zionism mean? An interdisciplinary conference exploring "the Zionist cultural project at the nexus of national vision, social institutions and public culture," "ImagiNATION," will take place February 5-7, 2006 at Arizona State University in Tempe. *asu.edu/clas/jewishstudies/conference.html*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"Let us restore the Divine In-Dwelling to Her Place in Zion & throughout the whole inhabited world."
So wherever we are, let us bring the Peace of G@d's Presence.

Aviel Barclay, Soferet offers free mezuzah checking. A documentary on the work of this female ritual scribe aired in November on VisionTV in Canada and the Faith & Values TV in the U.S. *http://visiontv.ca/Programs/documentaries_soferet.html; www.wofav.tv/.*

The Balabusta Project. Preserve the legacy of the great women of your family by sharing stores about them for a planned anthology. Send by December 31, or request an extension from Linda Blackman (847)550-9938. *Balabusta.com*

Exploring Sexual Orientation Issues in the Jewish Community. The Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation at the Hebrew Union College –Jewish Institute of Religion hopes to enable its students to integrate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people into congregations and communities. Dialogues, case studies, Q&As, previews and links to other useful materials are available at the Virtual Resource Center. *vrc.vpi.net*

KIM HANSEN

Cup of Coffee? The Abayudaya Jewish community of Mbale, Uganda, a 700-member indigenous Jewish farming community in existence since 1919, has joined with their Muslim and Christian neighbors to produce Mirembe Kawomera Ugandan Coffee, a new brand available from Thanksgiving Coffee Company. The project, two years in the making, was conceived and developed by J.J. Keki, who organized hundreds of neighboring farmers door-to-door on foot, and singer-activist Laura Wetzler, Uganda Coordinator for Kulanu, a Jewish charitable organization, who approached 50 coffee companies with the idea. "This project, created by Jewish coffee farmers in coalition with their Muslim and Christian neighbors, demonstrates the concept of *tikkun olam,* or 'repair of the world' in action," says Wetzler. (800)648-6491. *mirembekawomera.com*

Crocheted Colorful Kippot. Mayan women in San Marcos, Guatemala, on the shores of Lake Atitlan, began making kippot a few years ago at the suggeston of a volunteer who saw their crocheted hackysacks and small purses. The work of the kippot crocheters makes a difference in the daily life of families, especially meaningful since many artisans suffered the loss of their homes and possessions and even some family members in the recent Hurricane Stan. Kippot in various colorful designs, approximately 6 inches in diameter, are $8/each. *mayaworks.org*

Family-to-Family Disaster Relief. Help a family that was displaced by Hurriane Katrina. Three years ago Pam Koner, of Hastings-on Hudson, NY, founded Family-to-Family in response to learning about the abject poverty of many residents of Pembroke IL, and her efforts have multiplied. With "It's in the Bag," a sponsoring family sends a soft duffle or laundry bag to a matched needy family. Inside are a letter of explanation and introduction, a needs questionnaire, a pen and a return addressed stamped envelope which will be mailed back to the sponsoring family. Check out a variety of ways to help, great for bat/bar mitzvah and youth group projects too. *family-to-family.org*

Preparing for Midterm Elections. "Invisible Ballots: A Temptation for Election Fraud" is a thought-provoking, disturbing, nonpartisan documentary about electronic voting machines. The latest General Accounting Office study of these machines showed, in the words of the RockRiverTimes, Rockford, IL. "No responsible business would operate with a computer system as flimsy, fragile and easily manipulated as the one used in the 2004 election." Chicago-based electoral reform activist Joan Brunwasser has started a lending library with 60 copies of the film available free, in the hope of creating a buzz about electoral reform. *CountEveryVote@gmail.com*

—compiled by Naomi Danis

www.Lilith.org

Rabbis' Wives: Then and Now

by Shuly Rubin Schwartz

The G's were a lovely rabbinic pair…On one visit, a very long time ago, my host Rabbi descended to the cellar to take care of the ashes…I heard him say, "Leah, I think I have a wedding today, please check my calendar." Leah promptly did and reported, "No, there is nothing on the calendar."

The Rabbi emerged from the basement, clothes covered with white dust, and decided to look up his own pocket calendar. "Heavens, yes, a wedding..." But where? He had neglected to enter the time and place. Rebbetzin to the rescue.

She called the home of the bride and the mother answered. The Rebbetzin said, "This is Western Union. We have a telegram for you. Where is the wedding taking place?" "It will be at the Rabbi's home at 2:00." Well, the three of us put that house in order fast. The Rabbi got out of his jeans and into his striped pants and black jacket. Nes godol hayo shom*—a great miracle happened there.*

Lilly Soloway Routtenberg, wife of Max Routtenberg, rabbi in Reading, Pennsylvania (1932-48) and Rockville Centre, Long Island (1954-72), penned the above story. As the "miracle" demonstrates, Routtenberg believed that rabbis needed the knowledge, dedication and ingenuity of their wives to succeed in their careers. The rebbetzin [rabbi's wife] expertly set up the ritual objects for the wedding, but since her actions fell well within the purview of the homemaking role, they simultaneously reinforced the gendered nature of her position rather than threatening her husband's. At the same time, performing mundane housekeeping duties in preparation for a wedding imbued such work with a larger, sacred purpose.

"Without a wife, it's half a rabbinate."

Throughout her life, Routtenberg understood the rabbinate as a two-person career. In her words, "without a wife, it's half a rabbinate." Serving her husband's congregation as hostess, educator, writer and speaker, she recalled with great satisfaction that "we had a very happy rabbinate."

It is not surprising that many rebbetzins of the era felt the same way, given prevailing societal attitudes. Women made up approximately 40 percent of all college students in the 1930s and 1940s. But marriage and family continued to be the primary goal for American women. Frustrated, many educated, ambitious wives continued to search for acceptable ways to combine marriage and career.

During this period, society came to believe that marriages succeeded more fully when women served as wife-companions who shared an interest in their husbands' work. They also made an effort to learn more about their husbands' careers, working as nurses or office managers for their doctor or businessman husbands. In this circumscribed way, some women succeeded in maintaining careers after marriage.

In the 1930s and 1940s, women encountered a husband-wife team relationship in the White House. Already in 1930, as a governor's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt had described the significance of this kind of marriage, noting that while women had formerly focused on motherhood, they now increasingly emphasized their roles as partners to their husbands. Roosevelt modeled this shift, for she took on so many activities that reporters described Franklin and Eleanor as a team.

As the First Lady, through her newspaper column "My Day" and public appearances in a variety of venues, Roosevelt influenced policy to a degree unparalleled in the White House. Some rabbis' wives felt a unique affinity with Roosevelt, for they, too, had a special title which derived from marriage.

During the 1930s and 1940s, marriage to a rabbi continued to be an ideal avenue for Jewish women to combine marriage and career in a way that reinforced rather than challenged societal views.

[Fast forward 30 or 40 years]

"Hearing 'Woman of Valor' makes me want to throw up." This rebbetzin's lament resonated all too often by the mid 1970s.

Even what to call the rabbi's wife became a "hot button" issue in the 1970s. Debate over the changing role of the rebbetzin spilled out of the seminaries and rabbinical conventions and into the general press in 1975. The debate reached a fevered pitch with the publication in 1978 of *Rachel, the Rabbi's Wife* by Silvia Tennenbaum, herself a rebbetzin. This novel opens with a description of rabbi and rebbetzin making love on a cold January morning, their post-coital afterglow rudely interrupted by a call from the synagogue. "*Shit!*" the rabbi cursed as he hung up the phone, "They want me for the *minyan*."

"'Woman of Valor' makes me want to throw up."

Adapted from the new book *The Rabbi's Wife: The Rebbetzin in American Jewish Life* by Shuly Rubin Schwartz (NYU Press, 2005).

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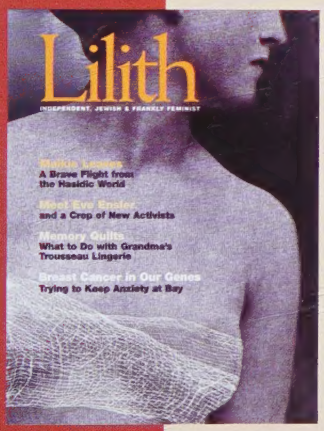
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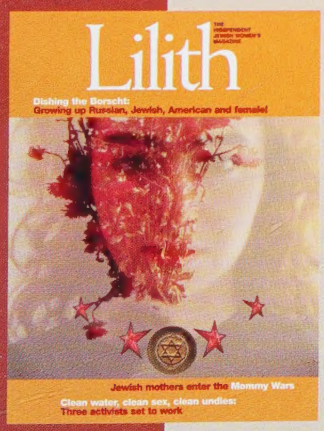
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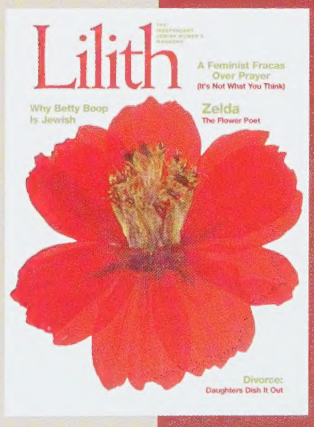

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